

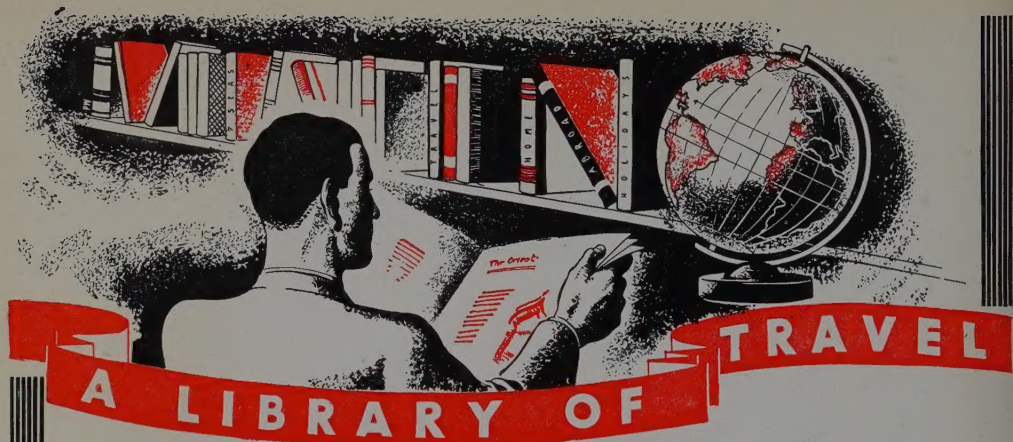


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*CHRISTMAS NUMBER*

1/-

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# Aerial Dances of the Otomis

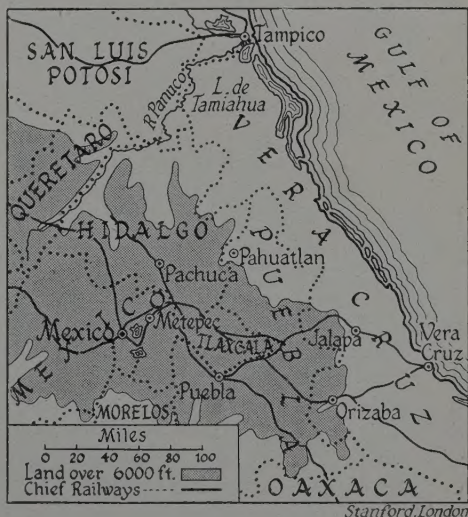
by RODNEY GALLOP

*So rare is it to find living traces of the Aztec world which the Conquistadores destroyed, and so extremely strange are the dances herein portrayed by Mr Gallop, that the exceptional interest of his present article will immediately be recognized. Mr Gallop is the author of important works on European folk-lore and dance, and is thus unusually well qualified to interpret the meaning of this remarkable survival*

AN Indian ceremony dating from before the Spanish conquest of Mexico and preserved virtually unchanged till the present day: the prospect was alluring enough to tempt us from the fleshpots of Mexico City into the welter of rugged mountains and precipitous valleys known as the Sierra de Puebla. From Montezuma's city of Tenochtitlan, still today the capital of the Republic, the high plateau continues for many miles eastwards at a mean height of 7500 feet. It is a monotonous landscape of low, dusty mountains and wide plains diapered with plantations of the spiked *maguey* aloe. To all appearances interminable, it comes to an end with dramatic suddenness. Pine-woods clothe the brink of the tableland, and when one emerges from them one is looking down into a deep canyon, its bed vivid with the green of sugar, banana, orange and coffee. To the east the valley opens out towards the coastal plain of Tampico and the Mexique Bay, to which the disintegrated plateau points long fingers which, like promontories, shelve away and are engulfed in the sea of tropical vegetation. Built in an amphitheatre on one such jutting spur is the town of Pahuatlan, attainable only on foot or on the back of sure-footed mountain mules. (This statement requires qualification, for in the village street we saw a dilapidated car. How it got there is a mystery and how it will get away again a greater.) It took us half a day winding backwards and forwards on the dizzy trail to reach the little *pueblo*.

Gradually the ridges of the plateau climbed up into the sky, transformed as though by alchemy into towering moun-

tains, cutting off valley from valley. In the brilliant afternoon light their shadows fell across little Indian villages, framed in green maize-fields, Otomi on the far side of the valley, Aztec on the near. Interrupting their flow of vernacular speech with a friendly "Buenas tardes," Indians passed us on the trail or stood at their pack-mules' heads while, with a drop of hundreds of feet below, we hugged the inside of the trail. The air grew warmer and lost the thin, sharp bite of the *meseta*. Flowers appeared in the undergrowth and flowering bushes beside the trail: wild begonias, the white trumpets of the poisonous *floripundio* and others to which we could give no name. The sun had sunk behind the western wall, and a soft dusk was falling when at last we rounded a steep escarpment and came in sight of an



amphitheatre of white houses, flanked and overhung by gardens and orchards carved out of the hillside. Thus we arrived at Pahuatlan to see the famous *juego de los voladores*.

When Mrs Helga Larsen told the archaeological authorities of Mexico a year or two ago that she had found the *juego de los voladores* still surviving in the north-western corner of the State of Puebla, they were at first disinclined to believe it. It was known that this curious ceremony, depicted in the pre-Spanish Aztec codices, had survived into colonial times, for it was described in 1612 by Fr Juan de Torquemada. Madame Calderon de la Barca saw a *palo volador* on her way to Mexico City only a hundred years ago, but many things disappeared in the intervening century and its survival today was recognized as a discovery of first-class importance. Hence our expedition.

There was no special *fiesta* in Pahuatlan that week-end in mid-December. Through the kindness of Señor Abogado, the Mayor, we had been able to arrange that the Otomi Indians of Huehuetlilla (one of the villages we had seen on our way down) should perform specially for our benefit in order that data might be collected and photographs and cinema films taken without the fluster and inconvenience unavoidable at any important festivity.

We had reckoned without the weather, however. The day of our arrival it looked as though it could never rain again. We were now no longer on the rainless tableland, but in the *tierra templada* at about 4000 feet, where the weather is notoriously uncertain. During the night one of the dreaded 'northerners' swept the Gulf, the valley filled with cloud like a seething cauldron, and we awoke in a drizzle which not only dismayed the photographers but, by wetting the ropes on which the *juego de los voladores* depends and making them slippery and dangerous, jeopardized our chances of seeing anything at all.

After a dispiriting breakfast the *voladores*

came to our lodging and discussed their chances and ours. They were all pure Otomis, talking their strange monosyllabic idiom—solike Chinese to the unaccustomed ear—which has defied more than one attempt to transcribe it phonetically.

Of the tribes living within easy reach of the centres of Mexican civilization the Otomis are by far the most primitive, and are often described as the Boeotians among Mexican Indians. It has even been suggested that they were the original bearers of the 'archaic' civilization which in the Valley of Mexico preceded the Toltec and Aztec cultures. It seems more probable, however, that the Otomis are relative newcomers to their present haunts, a primitive hunting-race who settled in unfertile country and assimilated none of the culture which developed among surrounding tribes. Today the Otomis spread like a fan to the north-east and north-west of Mexico City. Wild and unkempt-looking, they adhere more closely than most Mexican Indians to the modes of life and thought of their ancestors. For instance, they preserve strange traditions of magic, carefully guarded from outsiders, involving the use of little figures cut out of hand-made paper. In place of, or in addition to, the widespread *sarape* blanket the men often wear the *ayate*, a shawl woven of *ixtli*, the spun fibre of the *maguey* aloe, embroidered in gay patterns and bright colours. Where the climate is not cold enough to impose the *rebozo* shawl of Spanish origin, the women adhere to the pre-Spanish *quechquemiltl*, a little cape made of two rectangular pieces of beautifully embroidered cotton. Above all, the Otomis have preserved the *juego de los voladores*, which, in spite of the inclement weather, we were now to see.

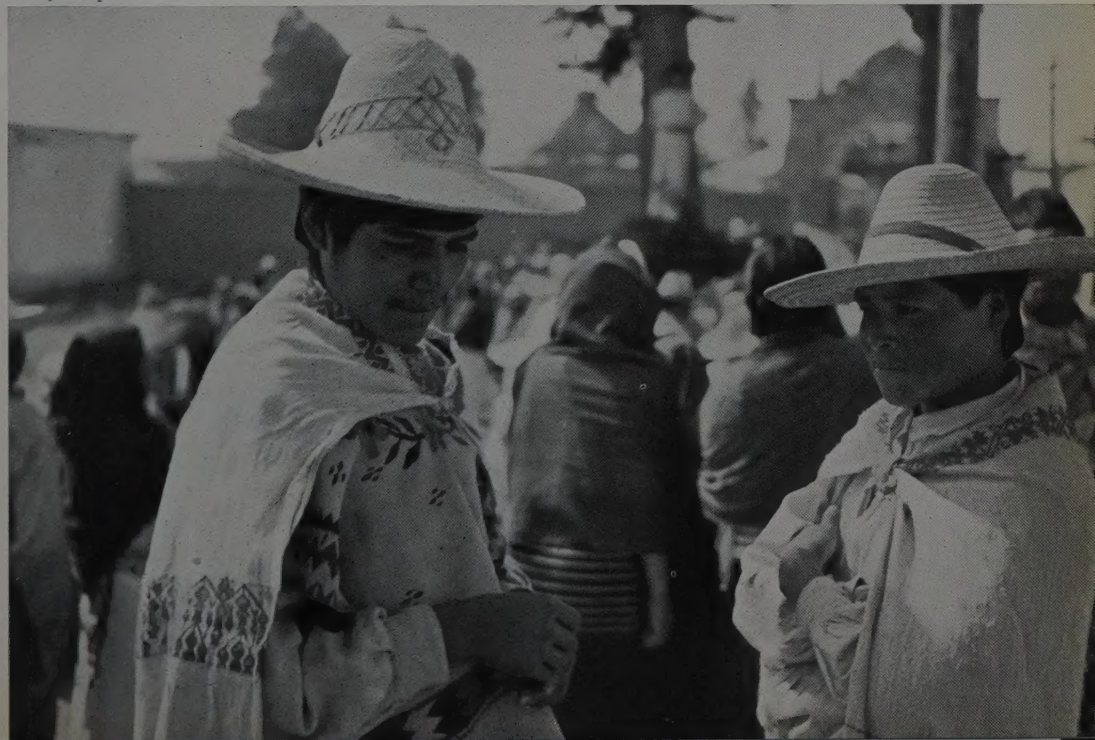
After lunch the rain stopped, and the clouds which had been swirling through the streets lifted a few hundred feet up the hillside. The *voladores* gallantly expressed themselves ready to fly, and changed into their festal costume. Over the white

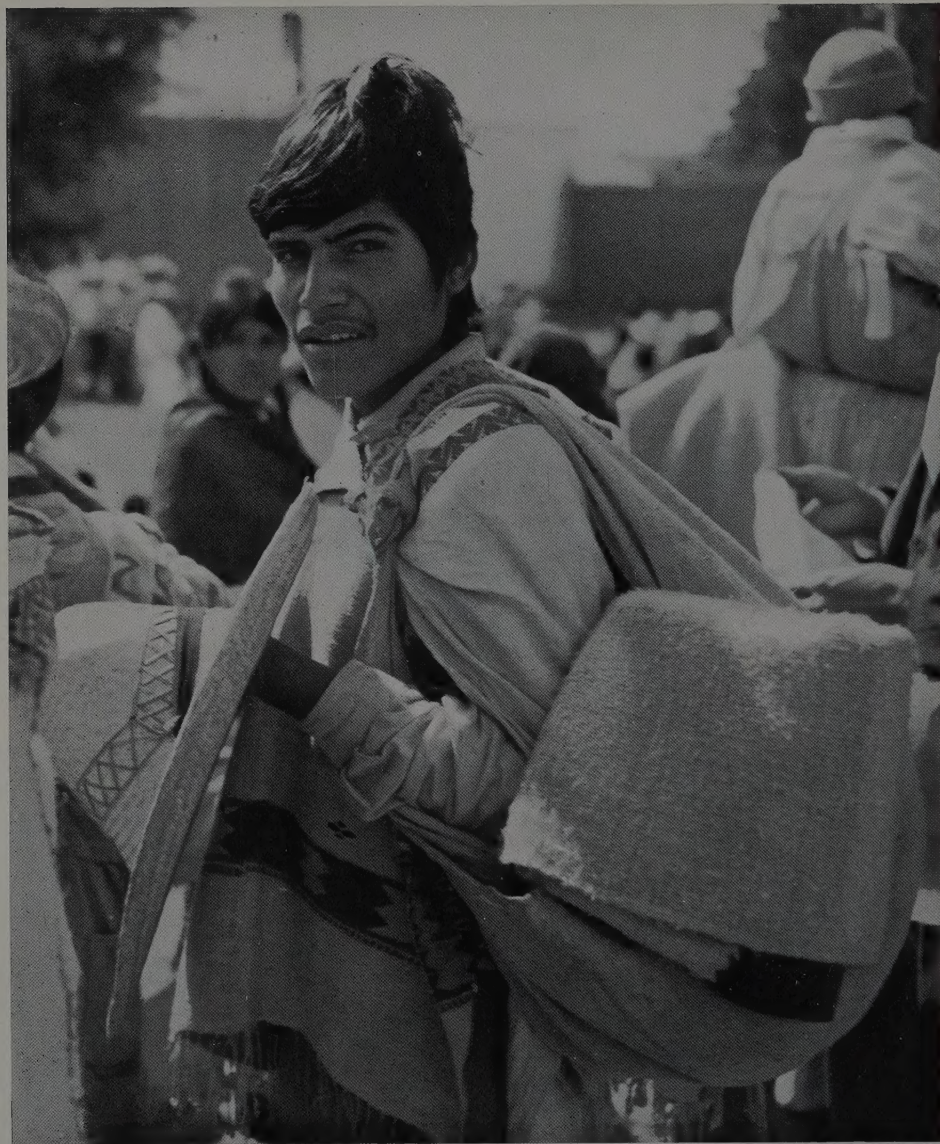


Rodney Gallop

*The Otomi Indians, who have preserved the remarkable dances described in the following pages, are by far the most primitive of the tribes living within easy reach of the centres of Mexican civilization. They adhere more closely than most Mexican Indians to the customs of their ancestors. Wild and unkempt-looking, they assemble, some dressed in gay costumes, to watch the performance*

Rodney Gallop





Rodney Gallop

*An Otomi Indian wearing the popular sarape blanket and the ayate shawl of spun aloe fibre*

*In the country between the vast tableland on which Mexico City lies and the eastern coast the weather is notoriously uncertain. An effective reed raincoat prepares a visitor to the marketplace at Pahuatlan for the worst*

Rodney Gallop



Rodney Gallop



*An Aztec visitor adheres to the pre-Spanish quechquemitl, a little cape made of two rectangular pieces of cotton, beautifully embroidered. In many places, however, the coldness of the climate has imposed a shawl of Spanish origin*



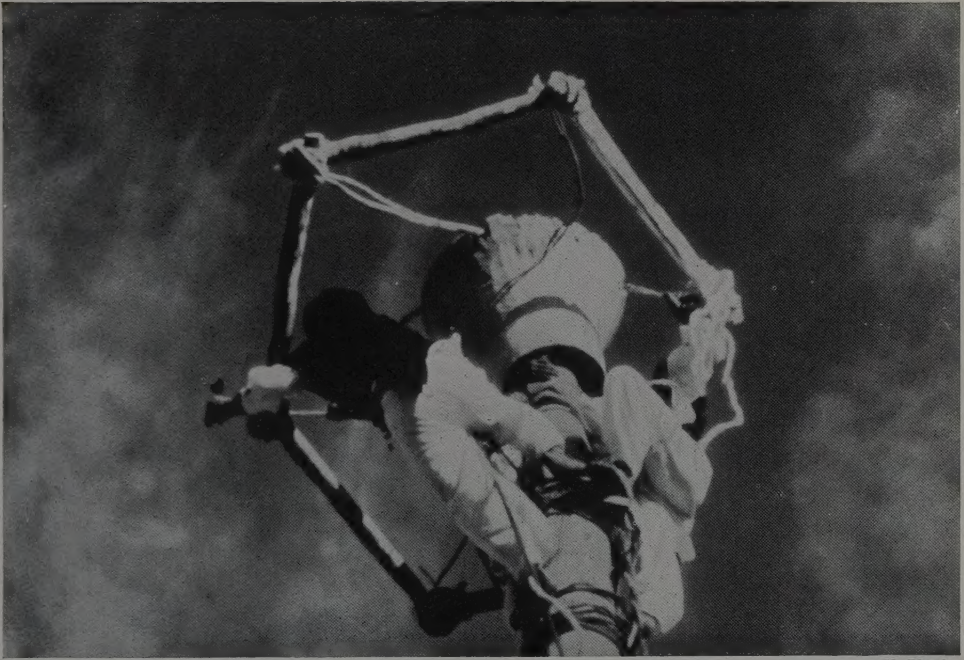
Rodney Gallop

Rodney Gallop



The flying dance is about to begin. (Above) Three of the voladores at the foot of the eighty-foot pole from which they are to fly. From left to right—a dancer, Malinche (a man dressed as a woman) and a musician with pipe and tabor

(Left) Malinche with 'her' wife and child. Such a 'man-woman' figures in many Mexican (and European) folk-dances; but the name—that given by the Aztecs to the Indian woman who saved Cortes' life—is puzzling in this connection



H. Fletcher

*Preparing the gear, at the top of the pole, on which the flight depends. A wooden mortar-shaped cap forms the hub of a hexagonal frame. Below this cap six ropes are wound*

cotton pyjamas which are the usual Indian dress they pulled scarlet knee-breeches with lace fringes and fastened little aprons of the same colour. Over both shoulders and across the chest and back they tied bandana handkerchiefs bandoleer-wise, and on their heads they wore scarlet berets. Five out of six were dressed in this fashion, one carrying a three-holed pipe with a tabor slung over his arm, and the others *sonajas*—gourd-rattles filled with small stones like the maracas of a Cuban rumba band. The last played a special rôle, that called Malinche, and was dressed as a woman in a red skirt with a white *quechquemiltl* and a head-kerchief. In his hand he carried a handkerchief and a little painted gourd-bowl of the type which the Otomi women of San Pablito wear on their heads.

We gathered in the arcaded central square of the village, where a dejected

market was being held, the vendors protected against the wet by reed cloaks or banana leaves spread over their heads and backs. In the middle the *palo volador* towered into the sky, a stripped pine trunk eighty feet high, buried eight or ten feet in the ground, its base supported with boards and wire. A long vine stem had been freshly wound round the pole to afford a foothold, and the *tecomate* (literally, 'gourd'), the name given to the apparatus on which the performance depends, had been newly placed in position. Of this a careful description is necessary in order that the reader may understand how the *voladores* fly. It consists of a wooden, mortar-shaped cap, about a foot high and two feet across at the top, hollowed out so that it can be fitted on to the top of the pole. This cap forms, as it were, the hub of a hexagonal wooden frame which hangs from it by cords fastened to the corners.



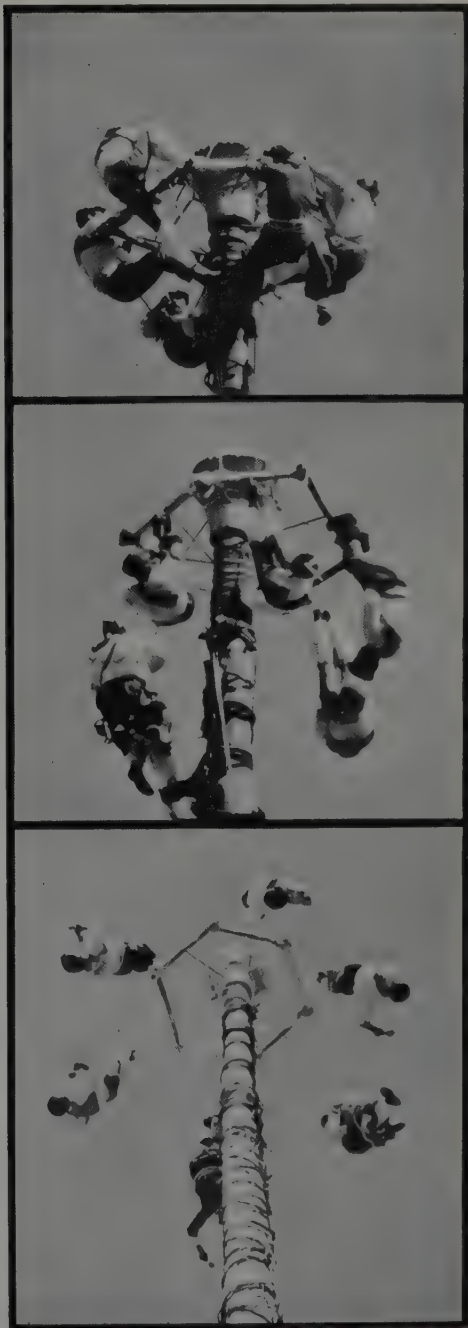
Rodney Gallop

*The six voladores ascend the pole; the musician strikes up a tune and they dance in turn on the top; then, with the ropes round their waists, they throw themselves down into space . . .*

Round the top of the mast just below the cap are wound six ropes, each long enough when unwound to reach the ground.

When all was ready the six *voladores* climbed up the pole and ensconced themselves facing inwards on the six sides of the frame. The pipe-and-taborer struck up a thin, rhythmic little tune, and one of the others climbed up on to the very top of the cap and on that miniature platform proceeded to execute a stamping, jumping dance of unmistakably Indian character, shaking his gourd-rattle in time with the music. He must have danced for nearly ten minutes at that dizzy height, as in their turn did the four others. Last of all, Malinche, though hampered by 'her' skirt, clambered up like the rest and danced for fully twice as long as the others, moving her gourd and kerchief rhythmically from side to side. The last part of 'her' dance included a perilous movement in which, at intervals, 'she' stooped down on one knee and passed 'her' kerchief over the head of each of the others in turn.

Now all had danced, and the moment had come for the climax of the whole performance, the descent. Carefully the *voladores* fastened round their waists the ends of the ropes wound round the *tecamate*. Gingerly they stepped backwards and outwards over the frame, grasping it with their hands and resting their feet against the pole. For a moment they paused, looking like some great white-and-scarlet bud. Then the bud opened into flower. At a given signal they threw themselves outwards and downwards into space. Their weight set the cap slowly revolving on the top of the pole, and, as its revolutions unwound the ropes, the *voladores* were whirled round in ever-widening circles. As they swung clear of the framework, all except Malinche grasped the ropes between their feet so that they continued their flight head downwards, the musician never ceasing for an instant to play his pipe-and-tabor or the others to shake their gourd-rattles. Except for



H. Fletcher



Rodney Gallop

*The cap revolves, the ropes unwind, and the voladores are whirled round in ever-widening circles*

this music and the menacing creaking of the pole, all was still in the market square. Dusky faces were upturned, framed as though by a halo in the wide brims of their sombreros. When the flyers were a little more than half way down, a voice beside us exclaimed: "Now there's no fear the pole will snap."

A moment or two later the flyers were swinging round only a few feet above our heads. Moving prudently away from the pole we watched them describe their last few revolutions, and then, when it seemed that their heads must inevitably be dashed against the ground, they let go the ropes with their feet and landed as lightly as children from a Giant Stride. The flight had taken just over two minutes.

The weather remained lowering and overcast, but information which the flyers gave me on this occasion enabled me to see their dramatic performance again two months later in brilliant sunshine at Metepec, just over the border of the State of Hidalgo. It was the *fiesta* of the Cristo de Metepec. This was not, like the last, an arranged performance, but a purely spontaneous act in fulfilment of a *promesa* (vow) and attended by one or two features which had been omitted at Pahuatlan. Thus a new character in ordinary clothes with a blackened face, called the *Negrito*, was there to protect the pole from evil influences. With this object he carried a whip and a stuffed skunk, the former conceived no doubt as operating by the power of noise and the latter by that of smell. There were other groups of dancers present. Indeed at one moment four of them were dancing simultaneously in the church, each with its own music. One of these was the dance of the *quetzals* enshrining in their tall, crested head-dresses some faint atavistic memory of the Plumed Serpent Quetzalcoatl. Another was the Dance of the Santiagos, enacting the eternal combat between good and evil, personified respectively by St James, the Patron Saint of Spain, and Pontius Pilate. This group

danced round the pole while the *voladores* were in flight, and Santiago incidentally was imprudent enough to get in their way, as the result of which he was sent sprawling



Rodney Gallop

*The pipe-and-taborer has never ceased playing for an instant, and is still at it, upside down, within a few feet of the ground*



*Sometimes a character called Negrito, in ordinary clothes, but with a blackened face and carrying a whip and a stuffed skunk, is in attendance to protect the pole from evil influences.*

*Other groups of dancers, with their own music, may be performing simultaneously. This is the dance of the quetzals, whose tall head-dresses preserve a faint reminiscence of the hero-god Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent*

*Rodney Gallop*



*Rodney Gallop*



*Rodney Gallop*

*Rodney Gallop*

*Another dance, which goes on round the foot of the pole while the voladores are in flight, is that of the Santiagos, representing the eternal combat between good and evil*



*The two sides of this struggle are personified respectively by St James (Santiago in Spanish), the patron saint of Spain, and Pontius Pilate. St James, on the left, wears a hobby-horse*

in a manner which must have rejoiced Pilate's heart.

The *juego de los voladores* is depicted in early Aztec codices dating from before the Spanish Conquest, but curiously enough it finds no mention in the exhaustive account of Mexican customs left by Fr Bernardino de Sahagún. The first connected account is therefore that written by Fr Juan de Torquemada in 1612 in his book *De la Monarquía Indiana*. It shows how extraordinarily little the performance has changed in three and a quarter centuries. The principal differences are that the frame was square and there were

only four flyers, who 'clothed themselves as various birds, that is to say some assuming the form of eagles, others of griffons and others of other birds representative of greatness and nobility'. It is no doubt the wings which they wore that have shrunk into the crossed bandana handkerchiefs of the present day. Torquemada does not mention any Man-Woman like Malinche, but states that some eight or ten other dancers accompanied the flyers to the top of the pole and slid down the ropes when the flight was nearing its end.

It is when he comes to consider the significance of the custom that Torquemada is most interesting. 'I think that this contraption was invented by the Devil', he writes, 'to keep these his false servants and devotees in fresher and more continuous memory of his infernal and abominable service; for it was a reminder of the fifty-two years which they reckoned to their century, at the end of which cycle of years they renewed with the new fire which they took out their pact and agreement which they had made with the Devil to serve him as many years again in the time to come.' It would be difficult to find a better example of the deities of one age becoming the devils of the next, for the fifty-two-year cycle was intimately bound up with the complex Indian religion, and, as Torquemada goes on to point out, the four flyers made up this number by each describing thirteen circles round the pole.

'This flight', he continues, 'did not cease at the time of the Conquest and Implantation of the Faith in these Indies; rather did it continue until the monks, ministers of God, discovered the secret and prohibited most rigorously that it should be done. But after the death of the first idolaters who had received the faith, and the sons who followed them having forgotten the idolatry which it signified, they have returned to the flight and performed it on many occasions; and . . . no longer care whether the *palos voladores* are fourfold, and



*Historia Antigua de México (Clavijero)*

*The flight as depicted in 1780. The four flyers are dressed as birds: their wings have shrunk to bandana handkerchiefs at the present day*



National Museum of Mexico

*That human sacrifices were formerly connected with the juego de los voladores is indicated by their association in the Aztec codices. This drawing, approximately contemporary with the Spanish Conquest, shows a victim being put to death by the arrow sacrifice alongside the volador pole*

thus they make them sixfold . . . and hang from them six ropes . . . not caring whether the circles are only thirteen in number, for according as the poles . . . are great or small, so are the circles many or few which they describe round them.<sup>2</sup>

From the eighty-foot pole of Pahuatlan the total number of circles described was twenty-two; from the slightly lower one of Metepec three or four less. Whether the Indians have really quite forgotten the significance of the custom may be judged from a remark made to us by one of the flyers at Pahuatlan: "We are the sacred birds that fly with the four winds to the four cardinal points, but nowadays six of us fly to make a finer show." Not only

does this remark show that the tradition of flying four instead of six has been remembered all these centuries, but the association of the flyers with the four points of the compass throws further light on the religious implications of the custom. Like the fifty-two-year cycle the cardinal points or 'world directions' played an important part in Mexican religious belief, thirteen of the years in each cycle being apportioned to each of them.

The puzzling character of Malinche now remains to be explained. In many Mexican, as indeed in many European, dances a Man-Woman figures, generally under this name. Malinche was the name given by the Aztecs to Marina, the Indian

woman who was both interpreter and mistress to Cortes and who, by warning him of the plot at Cholula, saved his life at the expense of those of three thousand of her countrymen.' In the 'Dance of the Conquest' representing the warfare between the Spaniards and the Indians, which is still performed in many parts of Mexico, the rôle of Malinche is easily explained. Can it have been borrowed illogically for other dances which had nothing to do with the events in question? Or did the name of Malinche, like our own Maid Marian, replace that of some earlier and more mysterious figure?

The Malinche of the *voladores* holds a gourd-bowl and a kerchief, as described above. That of the Aztec *Acatlachque* Dance, done in the next valley, also holds a little silver snake. We must go to the southern part of the Sierra de Puebla for enlightenment as to the meaning of these objects. Here the *voladores* are accompanied, not by one Negrito as at Metepec, but by a whole group of them with a Man-Woman called La Maringuilla who carries a gourd-bowl containing a wooden snake covered with a kerchief. At the end of the ceremony the bowl is uncovered, revealing the snake which the Indians make pretence to beat to death. When it is remembered that the masculine holder of one of the highest state offices among the Aztecs bore the name of 'Snake Woman', and that all through Central America the

snake is the emblem of the lightning, rain and rain gods, it will be realized that in spite of her name the figure of Malinche may go back to the remotest mythology of pre-Spanish Mexico.

Yet another detail of Aztec religious belief may help to account for the presence of an apparently female figure among these 'sacred birds who fly with the four winds to the four cardinal points'. In Aztec belief each of the world directions was connected with certain of the gods, the West being, as Mr T. A. Joyce puts it in his *Mexican Archaeology*, 'the home of the female deities, especially the earth-and-fertility goddesses'.

One more remarkable fact we discovered from the men of Huehuetlilla. About every three years, when the old pole warps, rots at the base or otherwise becomes unsafe, a new one is set up. On this occasion a turkey, the sacrificial bird of the ancient Indians, is first placed in the hole and the new pole is planted on top of it. This bird, our Otomi friends said, represents an offering in order that their lives may be protected from the dangers of the dance and flight. Not merely the outward form of this tradition, therefore, but even its sacrificial meaning has been scrupulously preserved, thus furnishing one more link in the chain of evidence showing how Christianity has adopted, and to the best of its ability sanctified, a ceremony of ancient pagan origin.

# Flying Dutch

by ROSITA FORBES

*A year ago Miss Forbes conducted our readers over the lands that lie along the air route from Rio de Janeiro to New York and showed that, for the traveller with knowledge and vision, an aerial perspective need by no means be superficial. She now gives us a bird's-eye view of the Netherlands East Indies and the way thither from India, with the aid of photographs supplied through the courtesy of that highly efficient organization, the Royal Dutch Air Lines*

In the hot, sweet darkness of an Indian night, we hurried through an excellent breakfast, climbed into taxis, and drove to the aerodrome. It all seemed very unreal. Three days ago I had been in Amsterdam, and it had been snowing. Since then Rome, Athens, Cairo and Baghdad had passed under the wings of the giant Douglas with the effect of a map unrolled. The last twenty-four hours had been particularly fantastic—morning tea at Bushire, lunch at Jask, the Persian Gulf, an extension of the sky with waves like spilled cream at the foot of unbelievable red rocks, Karachi in time for a cocktail, and then the Indian dusk and, punctual to the minute, the great K.L.M. plane circling down over the roofs of Jodhpur.

We had dined in a hotel like a country house. We had talked a great deal and slept a little, and now back to the aerodrome, with a blaze of red lights and the engine already running. One by one we clambered into the cabin and, within a few minutes, most of the passengers had succumbed to the comfort of the long sofa-like seats. Each in turn extinguished his 'bedside light'.

But from the darkness in which my companions slept I stared down upon the capital of Marwar, 'the land of Death'. Beneath the great fortress of Rao Jodhaji, built in 1459, a slave had been buried alive. Each of the seven gateways commemorates a victory as savage as it was heroic. On the walls are the imprints of soft childish hands made by the Rajput widows as they went out to die on the funeral pyres of their husbands.

For hours we flew above a haze of dust,

in which the lower clouds seemed to be entangled. India was reduced to brown cardboard with loops of the Ganges laid flat upon it.

At Allahabad we had a great deal of breakfast and Calcutta came at the right moment for lunch. The airport lies well outside the city, but we had a glimpse of the Victoria memorial, a sugar cake upon the green plate of the Maidan. In 1710, Captain Alexander Hamilton visited Calcutta and wrote of it: 'The English settled here in 1690 after the Moghul had pardoned all the robberies and murders, committed on his subjects'—referring in this manner to the commercial enterprises of tough old Job Charnock and his employers the Honourable East India Company. A modern writer describes Calcutta as 'a mixture of the obvious and the obsolete'. To us, in the air, the city seemed to wander in surprising and intricate fashion between waterways and gardens.

No trace of the earliest settlement remains, but if you know where to look for it you can still see the mausoleum of buccaneering Job, who, making an inspection one night of the Company's property, accompanied, no doubt, by armed guards and torch-bearers, passed a funeral pyre upon which a girl, lovely and most unwilling, was about to be immolated. The sight was altogether too much for Job Charnock. He seized the girl and took her away with him, after which, as Alexander Hamilton puts it: 'They lived happily and had many children'.

A local inhabitant pointed out the church where, in Zoffany's painting of the



*The fort of Jodhpur, guarding the old palace, towers on its arid red rock 400 feet above the surrounding plain*  
Photographs by courtesy of K.L.M. and K.N.I.L.M

Last Supper, Christ and the Apostles bear a striking resemblance to the prominent officials of the day. With more enthusiasm he indicated the ammunition factory at Dum Dum.

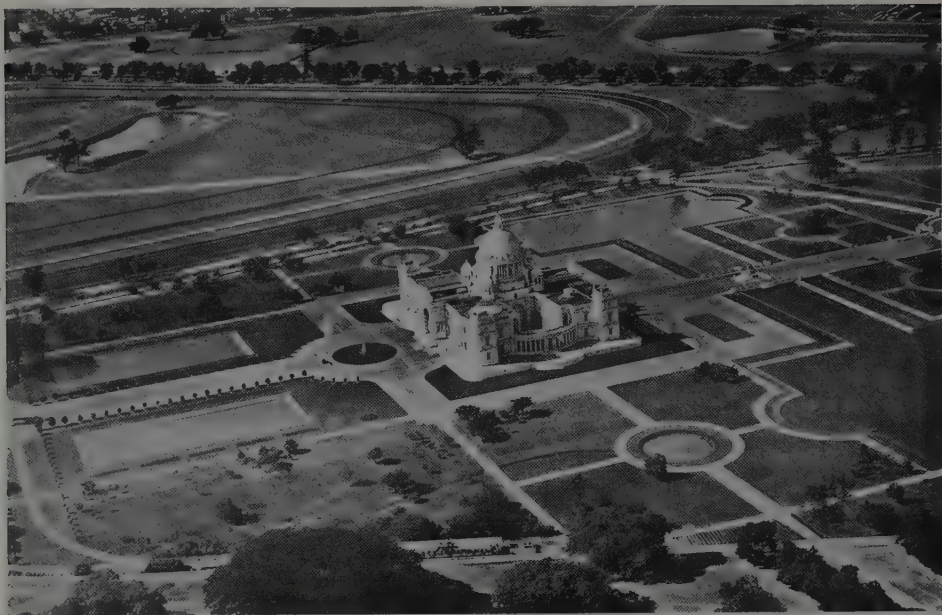
The Bay of Bengal appeared to me as a rainbow, for the Burma coast is broken into hundreds of islets, and these, scattering over the sea like a flight of birds, are of every imaginable colour. With my nose flattened against the window I looked down at Akyab, a scrap of a port, littered with rice boats, and the archipelago drifting southwards. Then we were over the forest that has no boundary but the Irrawaddy. Below us swelled the crests of the Arakan Yoma mountains, unknown, impenetrable, but so softly wadded in green. And at last, in mid-afternoon, we reached Rangoon.

The plane circled above the Shwe Dagon, that far-famed golden temple which dominates the whole of the Delta. I saw the central dome, surmounted by the *hti*, a sort of umbrella hung with bells and encrusted, it is said, with 35,000 precious stones. The pagoda is built over the eight hairs from the head of Buddha which, in 586 B.C., the Mahatma presented to two Burmese merchants, brothers, who found the divinity wandering hungry in a forest and fed him on honey. It stands on terraces and is surrounded by a crowd of smaller pagodas which jostle each other among a mass of booths and barefooted pilgrims.

Next day, flying on to Bangkok, we saw Moulmein Pagoda, of which Kipling wrote that it looked 'Eastward across the sea'. Maps, apparently, were no obstacles to the genius and the imagination of this great writer. No 'Burmah girl' was awaiting us, so we went on—far on to 'Muan Thai', the land of the Free People, otherwise Siam.

At first there were only mountains, jungle-covered and, so far as is known, without inhabitants. But eventually the deep-toned patchwork of green, sleek as silk, broke into paddy-fields and mud





*The aerial traveller's fleeting glimpse of Calcutta may include the Victoria Memorial, completed in 1921. It was built, largely on Lord Curzon's initiative, to house documents and pictures relating to Indian history*

villages. Near the streams the houses walked on stilts, and bamboos appeared as huge bunches of ostrich feathers.

At Bangkok we landed beyond the wide double curve of the Menam River, the 'Mother of Waters', whose offspring, in the shape of canals or *klongs*, cross and recross the town in a hundred different directions.

From the aerodrome of Don Muang, sixteen miles north of the town, we continued our 'Adventure in Comfort'. Between sleeping and waking—so smooth it was, this motoring on the best sky-roads—we looked down upon rice and palm trees, jungle, and water villages. More islands and the sea a deep green because of the weed floating just below the surface! Then Penang, which is officially Georgetown, and, still south-eastwards, we flew over sugar cane and rubber with occasional mines, for Malacca produces half the world's supply of tin.

The Straits were soon crossed and, five days after leaving Amsterdam, we glided gently down onto the aerodrome at Medan, capital of Deli, in Sumatra. Half a century ago Medan was virgin jungle. Today it is a modern city with white, wide-porched houses, electricity of course, experimental research stations, a medical institute, an admirable water supply and most of the amenities, cultural and culinary, of Amsterdam.

The history of Sumatra and Java began with spice, passed through phases of rubber, rice and sugar, and is today firmly rooted in coffee, tobacco and oil. In the far away 13th century Marco Polo, the famous Venetian, visited the East Indian archipelago. In 1444 a fellow-countryman, Nicholas de Conti, mentioned Sumatra as the goal of an Eastern journey and in 1513 King Emanuel of Portugal referred to 'this fair island' in a letter to Pope Leo X. The



*The Irrawaddy Delta near Rangoon, the next port of call, is dominated by the imposing Shwe Dagon Pagoda, the centre of Burmese religious life. Higher than St Paul's, it is covered with pure gold from base to summit. Outside the town is a gigantic reclining figure of Buddha*





*From Burma the K.L.M. machines fly over jungle-covered mountains down to the rich coastal plain of Siam, where, beside the streams that irrigate innumerable rice-fields, the villages 'walk on stilts'*

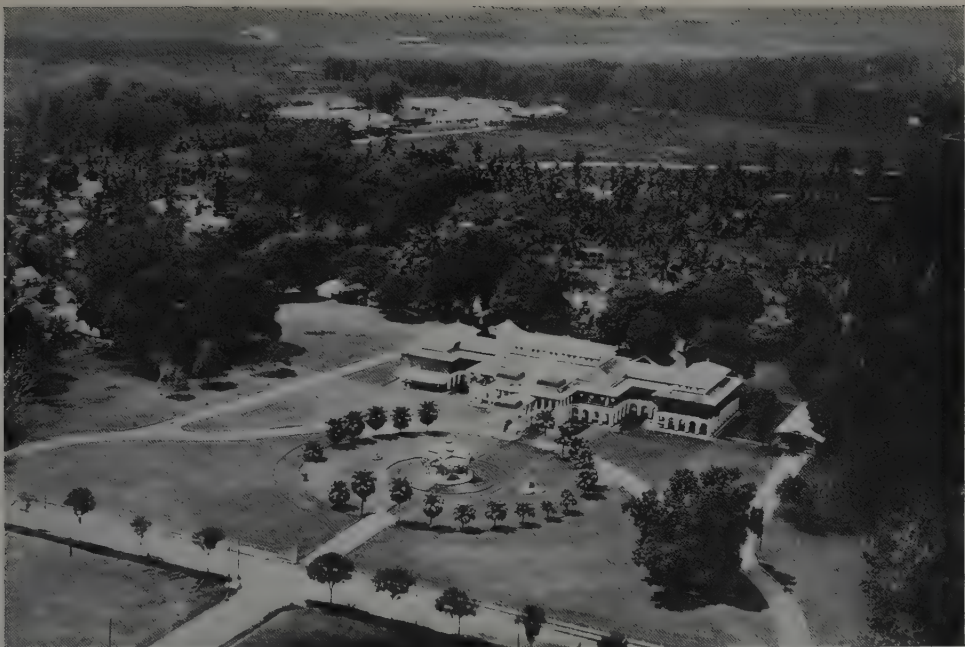
Portuguese were the first to develop a considerable trade in spices, but Dutch ships carried the precious merchandise to Lisbon. Then Philip of Spain conquered Portugal, and the hardy Dutch had to make their own way in the Indies.

Cornelius Houtman was the first to sail round the Cape to Bantam in West Java in 1595. Well received by the native rulers, he bought their nutmeg and cinnamon, their silks and Chinese porcelain. A few years later Van Neck's fleet returned so richly laden that various companies *van Verre* (for far-off lands) were founded, and in 1602 combined under the title of United East India Company.

The Spice Islands were wrested from the Portuguese, already weakened by wars with the Achinese, and by 1609 the archipelago was ruled by a Governor-General, as it is today, with an advisory 'Council of India' consisting of four members. But

the English were also interested in the isles of the Java Sea, and had it not been for Jan Pieterszoon Coen, the Job Charnock of Holland, their history might have been different. Coen was a magnificent freebooter and the real founder of Dutch power in the East. Appointed Governor-General in 1618, he fortified his own posts and, when the native prince of Jacatra protested, he captured his stronghold and built a new town on its ruins. Subsequently he wrote to the 'Seventeen', the Managing Board in Holland: 'We have at last acquired a strong footing and dominion in Java'. In other letters he expressed his philosophy, which was also that of the Anglo-Indian Charnock: 'Never lose hope and never spare an enemy'; and 'Nothing gives you a better right than power added to right'.

During the centuries that followed, the native kingdoms, of which the most import-



*On to Medan in Sumatra, capital of Deli, one of the Residencies composing the Netherlands East Indies. Here the Sultan's modern palace exemplifies the Dutch partnership with the ruling native princes—*



*—for Medan, fifty years ago, was not even a clearing in Sumatra's virgin forest*

ant were Bantam and Mataram, today the Sultanates of Jokjakarta and Surakarta, fought continuously among themselves until, in self-protection, they accepted the suzerainty of the Dutch.

Simultaneously, British power was growing and in 1795, as the result of an encounter between French and English on one side and Dutch on the other, Malacca and the west coast of Sumatra were ceded to Great Britain. The Napoleonic wars altered the balance of power and, when Napoleon was exiled to Elba, Holland found herself strong enough to demand the islands discovered by her mariners and developed by her somewhat ruthless Calvinist pioneers. By the London Treaties of 1814 and 1824 the Dutch regained their Eastern possessions. Sumatra was added to them with the exception of Achin, a ferociously independent native State which remained under British protection until 1871 and was not wholly subdued until 1904.

Dutch administration has always allowed a generous share of power to the natives, who are, in effect, ruled by their own chiefs under the Resident appointed by the Queen of the Netherlands, and the Javanese Regent, known locally as 'the elder and the younger brother'. The Regent is always a member of one of the ancient ruling families, and under him are the District Chiefs (*Wedono*) the Sub-District Chiefs (*Tjamat*) and the

Village chiefs (*Lura* or *Kuwuh*). The system closely follows that of the Romans, who were, perhaps, the finest colonial administrators that the world has known. Thus, according to R. G. Collingwood (*Roman Britain*): 'The country districts were governed not by a Roman Civil Service, but by their own native chiefs, successors of the pre-Roman landed aristocracy, formed into local councils and administering what must have been a mixture of Roman Law and local custom'. Such a description might apply to the Dutch East Indies today, where, since 1916, the 'People's Council' has acted as advisory to the Governors-General.

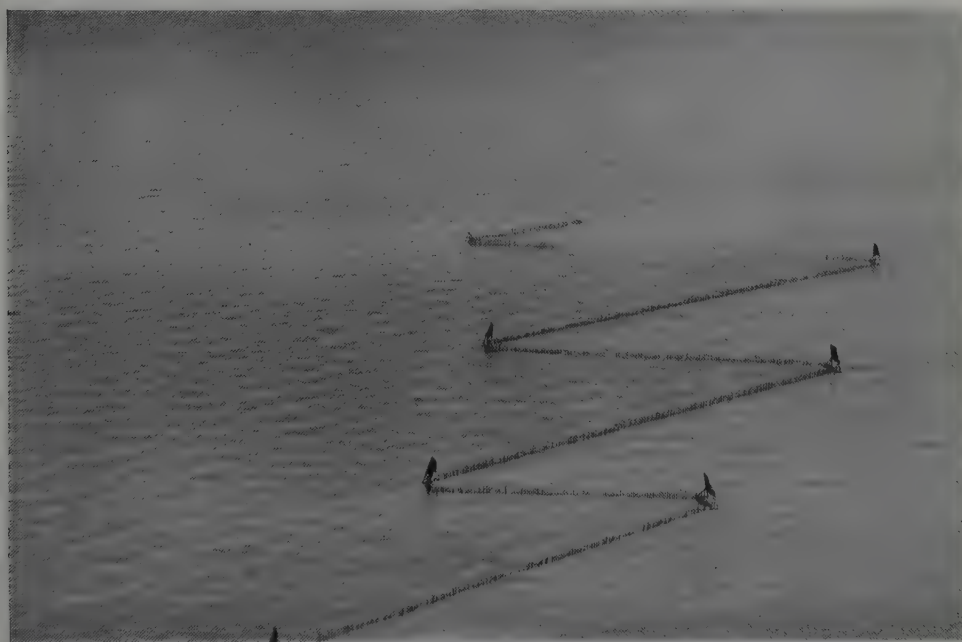
Medan is the northern and Palembang the southern gate of Sumatra. Between them, if you choose to fly by the direct route to Java, lie countless miles of forest, scarred in places by axe and fire and opening occasionally into plantations with bungalows and storehouses. But for the most part it is forest, smooth and unbroken, except for the glittering loops of a river, or a few high-roofed native houses with monstrous curled eaves that fit close into the jungle so that it is difficult to see them.

Sumatra has many different peoples, principal among them the Achinese—whose chiefs claim descent from Alexander the Great—and the Bataks, cannibals until the beginning of this century. Chinese, Klings, Sinhalese, Bengalis and Arabs inhabit the various coastal districts, and Palembang, where the K.L.M. planes pause for breath in the shape of several hundred gallons of petrol, is a Port Said of the Far East. The town straggles into the middle of the River Musi, for the last streets consist of rows and rows of bamboo rafts moored to poles. Behind these are numbers of houses built on piles standing well out in the water. Buying and selling are done from boats, of which a continuous stream drifts beetle-like between the banks. And the crowd that stands in or on the water wears all kinds of clothes and speaks all languages.





*Flying along the eastern plains of Sumatra, the passenger by K.L.M. may see curious sights : a herd of elephants, like ants strung out across a river—*



*—or zigzag fish-traps, like these near Bengkalis, which the natives empty at low tide*



*'You can be sure of Shell'—and your K.L.M. machine is sure to use it. Palembang, where a large part of the Royal Dutch-Shell's oil production is refined and stored*



*A native village where marsh and forest meet on the Komering River, south of Palembang*



*The submarine volcano of Krakatau, in the Sunda Strait, was once an island. An eruption in 1883 blew the top off: the noise was heard for 3000 miles*

My last glimpse of Palembang as the Douglas soared away was the great railway yard, terrifically European, pressing down upon the native huts, and then the marshes breaking into rice and cotton.

Sunda Straits appeared as a drift of rocks, amongst them Anak Krakatau, a submarine volcano which I had expected to explode in a volume of steaming water. Alas, nothing happened but a slight bubbling which might have been a whale.

We reached the Java coast at Bantam, ancestral home of our childhood's pets, and the sea was immediately alive with boats, the sails of every shape, while fishing-nets stretched out like seaweed as far as I could see.

The 'Thousand Islands' and the Bay of Batavia provided a fitting culmination for a journey that had been an adventure in colour as well as comfort, for since leaving the wind and snow of Northern Europe we

had seen the tropics as a canvas, treated in bold masses of red, purple, ultramarine blue, unbelievable greens and yellows laid on with a palette knife.

South of Batavia, sunk in flowering trees and intersected with canals that are additional highways, lies the aerodrome of Tjilintan. Here the steward opening the door beamed at us and said: "Not one bump in nine thousand miles." Epitaph of a perfect journey, and he pronounced it 'boomp', which made it sound smoother than ever.

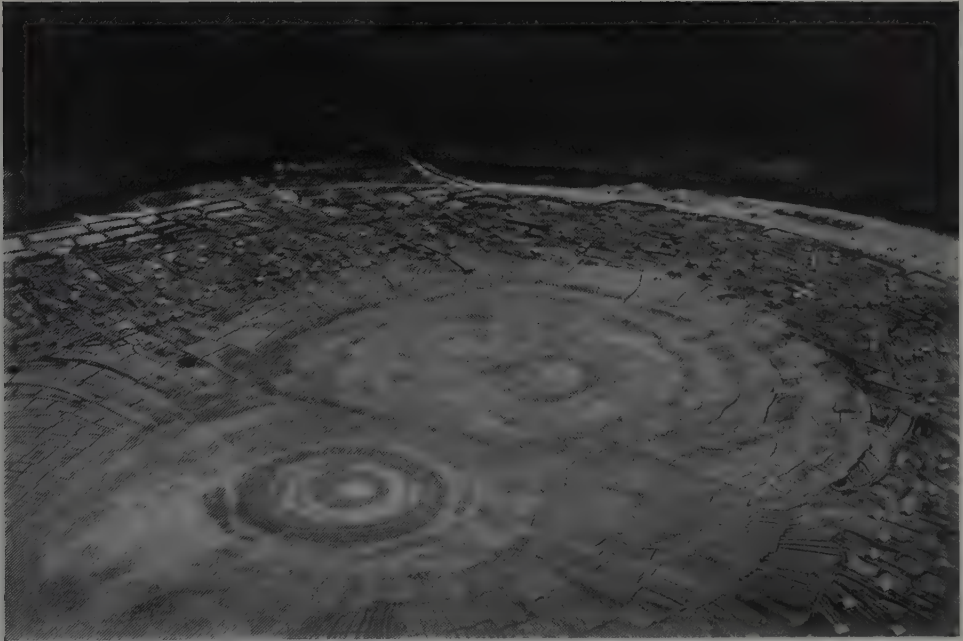
An auxiliary line, the K.N.I.L.M., takes charge of those who would, most sensibly, fly further over the Dutch East Indies, but first one must stay at the Hôtel des Indes and eat *reistafel* (which is all known food wrapped and smothered in rice) and learn to manage a Dutch wife (an extra bolster), supposed to be cooling.

In the air again, bound for Surabaya at the other end of Java, and for Bali, where



*Batavia, capital of Java, founded by the Dutch in 1619, is the centre of the Netherlands East Indies. (Above) The Batavia City Railway Station with the Java Bank and, opposite, the Netherlands Trading Company's building. (Below) The fair-ground in the Konigsplein (King's Square), over half a mile wide*





*The brine-wells near Semarang, yielding iodine and bromide as well as salt, are worked by the natives for their own use, though elsewhere in Java salt is a government monopoly*

the women are floral and the architecture the best possible embroidery, it was easy to distinguish between old and new Batavia. The former is an important commercial centre, a market for tin, tea, coffee, rice, rubber and Peruvian bark, and the headquarters of Stock Exchange and banks. Eastwards one can still see the old Portuguese Buitenkerk (the Outer Church), built for a group of Portuguese-speaking soldiers of the East Indies Company, who for a long time possessed as much influence as the Mameluke guards in Cairo. They were called 'Marijkers', derived from *merdike* (free), and were in fact the slaves converted to Christianity and then released by the Portuguese after the conquest of Malacca. These Asiatic Christians were loyal to their European masters, and under the Dutch, in whose honour they became Protestants, they fought as mercenaries throughout the archipelago. The new town is ex-

ceedingly decorative, for the houses of merchants—Chinese, Dutch, Arab and Hindu—are embedded each in a separate garden.

From the old town of Coen and the canals, broad flowering avenues lead to the newer towns: of Daendels, the great Governor-General of 1811, known as the 'Mighty Lord Thunderer' (*Tuan besar guntur*), who built with forced labour the magnificent mail road from east to west; and of Raffles, the Sir Stamford Raffles who founded Singapore in 1887 and governed Java during the Napoleonic period when Holland temporarily lost the isle to England. Then there is the garrison town of Meester Cornelius and Buitenzorg with the palace of the Governor-General and the famous botanical gardens. After that, the K.N.I.L.M. plane flies south-east to Bandung across a densely populated agricultural district. Looking down upon tier after tier of rice-fields planted upon



(Above) To pleasant houses in the hills round Semarang—the capital of a Residency—the European population migrates in the very hot weather. (Below) The old Hindu-Buddhist civilization of Java was broken up by the Moslem conquerors in 1475, but it has left a noble monument in the great sculptured stupa of Borobodur, dating from the 8th or 9th century A.D.



the mountain-side, it seemed to me the earth was neatly quilted, but the threads were the low dykes which separate the expanses of paddy.

Java is five times as large as the Netherlands and has a population of 40,000,000. The majority are Moslems or Buddhists, but sacrifices of flowers and fruit are still made to Dalyangdessa, patron deity of the innumerable reed and thatch villages, and to the *seitans*, spirits of evil who must be propitiated.

Flying over Java is reminiscent of the Book of Genesis. Here, in effect, are the seven days of creation—first the ocean in strange travail; then the mountainscarred by the livid craters of volcanoes, many of which are still active; the curiously immobile forest, where nothing stirs; the multiple stages of agricultural development—cocoa, tea, coffee, rice, tobacco, sugar and teak; and last of all the towns.

Bandung has the manners of a provincial capital, but after leaving its imitative sophistication sunk among the hills, we followed the Tji Tarun River by jungle, lake and rice-field, with the savage Guntur, 'the thunder mountain', rumbling in the distance. Eastwards we flew to Semarang, the third city of Java, richly commercial beside the sea, where we imagined ourselves looking at a highly coloured picture of 17th-century Holland, and on again to the exquisite Kedu Valley carpeted in rice. Here in the 'garden of Java', guarded by a ring of volcanoes, rises the famous Borobodur. The temple is in the form of a giant stone lotus and centres round a throne which for ever awaits the second coming of the great Lord Buddha. From the air the structure looks as if it budded into innumerable stupas, with the terraces spread out like the flat leaves of the lotus



*The Javanese today are largely Moslems. A mosque and minaret can be seen in this view of Surakarta, or Solo, seat of one of Java's most important native rulers*

plant. The building, which is supposed to date from the 8th or 9th century, has no interior. It is constructed round a central hill and the culminating stupa or pinnacle is a pyramid of steps. The base of the temple measures 570 feet square, and within it there are supposed to be relics, though nobody knows what they are.

Next we flew over the two principalities of Jokjakarta and Surakarta, once independent kingdoms. The palaces of the Sultans spread into towns, and among the acres of red and gold roof, the fighting-cocks have houses to themselves.

So we came to Surabaya, a great port, raucous with trade and crowded with the shipping of four continents, and past the great crater of Tosari and the Sand Sea—continually erupting into new volcanoes such as the ever-smouldering Bromo, the Batok, and Smeren, 12,130 feet high, which throws out volumes of sand and rock.

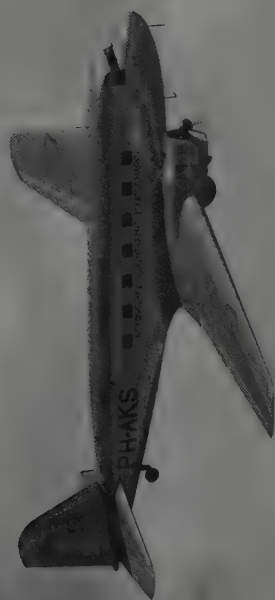
Without effort the K.N.I.L.M. plane lifted gently over the straits and there ahead was Bali, the fabulous island, of whose people Augusta de Wit writes: 'the perfection of beauty walking proudly, as if to a festival'.

Religion has been the creative instinct of Bali. In honour of Brahma or of the Buddha, here visualized as a younger brother of Siva, a peasant people, exquisite in their simplicity, have raised in every village the loveliest *pura* or shrine, with a separate 'dwelling of the gods' called *meru*, and sometimes a corpse-tower, where the dead await burial, or a flock of winged pagodas rising to 100 feet.

Southern Bali is historical because of the last struggle—in 1906—between the Dutch and the local princes. Near Kusambe one can see the cave where the three lords in their glorious orange and gold sarongs discussed the chances of battle. Djilantik,



*The eastern end of the island of Java is studded with volcanoes, both active and extinct, the highest of them rising to over 12,000 feet. This is the crater of Raoeng*



The *Scooter* ('*Scooter Hawk*') one of the F.I.M. machines used on the Amsterdam-Batavia route

Prince of Karang Asem, threw an egg against the rock, saying: "If the egg desires war with the stone, must it lose?"

His action symbolized the weakness of his hereditary principedom when opposed to the solid cliff of the Netherlands. In vain the Balinese fought. When all was lost, the Prince of Badung summoned his wives and last faithful followers to his palace. There, in council, they decided on *puputan*—the end. Each took a sacred creese, with magic in the blade, and thus armed, they flung themselves upon the Dutch. In spite of every encouragement to surrender, they insisted on death.

From Bali, whose 'perfection' of beauty has the charm of impermanence, we flew out once more across a sea where it is always summer—to Macassar in Celebes. And in this busy port, redolent of spice, where the natives try to sell forbidden birds of paradise for the whisky they are not allowed to buy, we left legend and drama behind us. For here again is Holland, busy, practical and hospitable. "A long way we have come, but a very short time, not so?" said a fellow-passenger stepping out into blazing sunshine and the scent of flowers. Over his arm he carried the fur-lined coat in which he had embarked eight days ago in Amsterdam.

### STARS FROM THE EAST

*It is rare to be able to assert with confidence that a forthcoming film will satisfy the demands not only of the sensation-hunters but also of those who seek, and too seldom find in the cinema, the qualities of truth and artistic integrity. This assertion can nevertheless be made when it is learnt that Mr Robert Flaherty has applied the gifts with which he made cinema history in 'Man of Aran' to the filming, on behalf of London Film Productions Ltd., of Kipling's famous story, 'Toomai of the Elephants'. The story, it will be remembered, centres round the capture of wild elephants in the keddah or stockade and the part played in it by a great elephant, Kala Nag, and his boy mahout Toomai. We are indebted to Mrs Flaherty, who accompanied her husband to India, for the following remarkable studies of the 'stars' chosen, after careful search, to impersonate these characters: Irawatha, one of the three largest Indian elephants in the world, and Sabu, 11-year-old orphaned child of one of the Maharaja of Mysore's mahouts.*



Daybreak : Sabu slumbers in safety under the protection of his guardian giant, Irawatha

All Photographs by Mrs Robert Flaherty



The morning bath : Irawatha luxuriates while Sabu scrubs him with a stone



Breakfast : Sabu tempts Irawatha with the titbit—a stick of sugar-cane



The daily dozen : A wave of Sabu's arm, and the great creature changes step



Off to work : With practised leg, Irawatha helps his young master to mount



Along the road : Sabu's trust in Irawatha enables him to take a peaceful nap



A wayside diversion : Up the ladder set by Irawatha, Sabu pursues a tree-loris



Salute : Chosen for difficult work in the *keddah*, Sabu and Irawatha express their joy

# A Journey to the Hadhramaut.

## III.

by FREYA STARK

*Miss Stark's concluding article treats of the three easternmost cities of the Hadhramaut—Shibam, Sewun and Tarim—of their polity and of the character of their leading families. Readers who are surprised to learn of the intimate relations maintained by them with places so distant as Singapore, and wonder how these relations came to be established, will find the explanation in an article 'Seamen of the Indian Ocean', to be published shortly in The Geographical Magazine*

As one enters the great Wadi Hadhramaut itself, the second longest wadi in Arabia, one steps into the main stream of what was once the chief trade route between India and Europe, and the chief trade route of the world for frankincense and myrrh.

The best frankincense today still grows in the mountains of Dhufar. As far as one can judge from the inadequate data as yet available, there were two ancient ways for the export of frankincense from Dhufar: one by sea to the port of Cana (Bir Ali) and thence northward by various ways to Shabwa overland; the other inland by a hitherto unidentified route to the Wadi Hadhramaut east of Tarim. In the Great Wadi itself these two routes joined, and continued in one wealth-dispensing stream westward to Shabwa, the great city

of the Chatramotitae—the Greek version of Hadhramaut—and then west and north through Marib of the Sabaeans, Ma'in of the Mineans, by the great temple of Tabala south-east of Mecca, to Petra, through solitudes which, in centuries of Islam long after the Arabian empires had crumbled, still continued to be trodden by the feet of pilgrims, who walked unknowing in the trading footprints of their ancestors.

Even in the days of its prosperity, it is my belief that only the southern portions of this great trade route ever ran through continuously cultivated lands; and even there the fertile Minean cities round Najran, the gardens of Marib, the rich valley of Behān, the Wadi Hadhramaut itself and the incense forests of Dhufar





*Photographs by Freya Stark*

*The mosque and minaret at Meshed, near the ancient ruined city of Ghebun*



*'Alone in the sand dunes, like a lighthouse among waves, stands the house of Diar al Buqri, which wages a small feudal war of its own with a township two miles away'*

were probably divided one from another by stretches of desert. The process of desiccation, continuing slowly ever since the pluvial age of Arabia, can be seen now in the western portions of the Great Wadi, where yellow dunes, blown from the northern sands, lie like long arid tongues down the wadi centre wherever neglect or war has allowed the palm-groves and irrigation to fall into decay. The rapidity with which this happens is sufficient explanation of the desolation which, in very few centuries, overtook one of the greatest arteries of trade the world has ever seen. When the Red Sea was found to be the easier way of traffic, when the great Silk Route was opened through Central Asia and diverted the Indian trade, the Arabian desert road declined; and, in the early days of Islam, the pagan cities with their walls and cisterns on the hill-tops of Yemen were already objects of legend and wonder to Semitic nomads, who descended in wave after wave from north and west on to the ancient centres of the incense land.

The car which the Sayyids Al-Kaf of Tarim kindly sent to meet me at Hajarain took me into the central stream of this vanished prosperity. It was the fourth car to find its way through the sand dunes from the Great Wadi as far south as Hajarain and required some ingenuity to do so, though we went by what must have been one of the high roads of traffic from the sea. The ruins of Ghebun, by which we passed, are those of a great city. Fragmentary walls of squared stone still stand, scraps of Himyaritic script are scattered, cut in stone, and little shards of flint and obsidian, relics of some ancient factory, lie strewn with potsherds on the ground.

The wadi running north now takes the name of Kasr, and widens. It receives in its sunburnt estuary the sand dunes of Wadi 'Amd, another ancient converging highway from the sea, and together the two great valleys, open and barren, sweep into the yet more open eastern-running reaches of the Great Wadi itself. Alone in the estuary, in the sand dunes, like a lighthouse among waves, stands the

*The old architecture of the Hadhramaut, seen to perfection at Shibam with its rows of recessed windows rising many stories high, affords an interesting comparison with—*



*Luce*

*—the stelae at Aksum in northern Abyssinia, which perpetuate the closely related Arabian style carried across the Red Sea by the early Habashi, colonists from Dhufar*



house of Diar al Buqri, which wages a small feudal war of its own with a township two miles away under the cliff. The household was sunning itself in a period of truce and offered us tea as we passed. After leaving it, threading our way in and out of its obliterated palm gardens, we turned the north-east corner of Kasr, and re-entered the more securely governed lands of Makalla, the district of Shibam.

Shibam, Sewun and Tarim are the three great towns of the wadi, and here the old architecture is seen in all its splendour. One may trace in the many-storied houses a kinship with that Arabian style which the early Habashi, colonists from Dhufar, took to Abyssinia and perpetuated in the stelae of Aksum. The Himyarites built in stone, the traders of Petra cut architecture in the rock-faces of their cliffs and modern Hadhramaut carves mud into delicate fancies: but the

style behind it all is the same, and many details—such as the ibex horns still used to decorate buildings or tombs—must come down by traditions incalculably old. Hadhramaut mosques are built on the pattern of old temples—open courts with tiers of columns on three sides and the more modern addition of a minaret with lace-like traceries. And each of the three cities has its own particular character.

Shibam is the most spectacular, and stands islanded on a small mound in an open meeting-place of wadis. The same conditions of restricted space which determined the skyscrapers of New York operated in Shibam centuries before: the size of its mound limited its houses to about five hundred—a fortress mass surrounded by a shallow ditch. It climbs to white-washed terrace roofs at a height of seven stories or so. From its slits of alleys, whose shadows are full of sewage pools,



*Another decorative survival in the Hadhramaut is the use of the horns of ibex, gazelle and goat to decorate buildings or tombs, in the ancient Sabaeen way*



*The Mosque of Al Qatn, built on the pattern of old temples, with open court and columns*



(Above) *The spectacular city of Shibam, 'islanded on a small mound in an open meeting-place of wadis', where the same conditions of restricted space which determined the skyscrapers of New York operated centuries before.* (Below) *A scene in Shibam—the bank of the Hadhramaut*





*Beyond Shibam the dominion of the Makalla Sultan gives place to that of the Al-Kathiri. New palm groves and white houses in the borderland testify to the passing of former enmity*



*Sewun, headquarters of the Al-Kathiri Sultan, breathes of peace*



*From the Sultan's palace, high above Sewun, one can survey the whole town—brown houses, white mosques, palms, squares and sunny lanes—and the distant cliffs of the wadi beyond*

the sky seems a narrow crooked ribbon, far away; the little minarets of mosques scarce rise to the elbows of the houses crowding round them. Shibam, by local tradition, is said to have been built when Shabwa, the ancient capital, was abandoned. Its strategic position makes it probable that it was inhabited from far earlier times, and there are Himyaritic traces in the Wadi Ser north and the Wadi Bin 'Ali south of it. In the Middle Ages it was a city 'where the horses of the king are kept' (horses being rarely seen animals in Hadhramaut to this day). It is now 'the bank of the Hadhramaut', and caravans from Yemen and the west, as well as those from Makalla, pass through its cobbled gateway.

At Shibam the slave soldier who had escorted me through the dominions of the Qe'aiti Sultan of Makalla left me. We crossed over to the Al-Kathiri, who hold the Wadi Hadhramaut east of Shibam. The borderland between them is heaped

with small ruins of towns, witnesses of former enmity, in contrast with the new palm groves and white houses along the southern slopes of the valley which testify to present peace.

Sewun, indeed, the second great city of the wadi, breathes of peace even as one approaches its quiet suburban walls. Cornfields and walled gardens surround it. Its dusty streets are quiet and open, padded over by the feet of camels, and rarely disturbed by one of Sultan Ali's two cars. His palace, in the middle of the town, seems the embodiment of paternal government, so solidly planted with mosque and market at its feet; and the Sultan himself, with his simple and excellent Arabian manners, his plump placidity, his love of books and gardens, is the embodiment of patriarchal government also.

In summer he retreats with one of his harims to a one-storied whitewashed bungalow in a garden, whose rooms open



*'The palace seems the embodiment of paternal government, so solidly planted with mosque and market at its feet'*



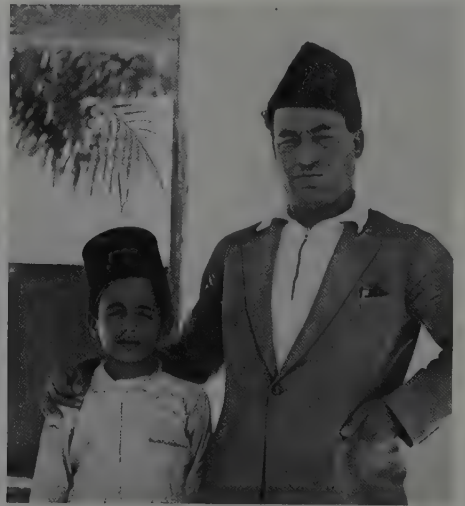
*The palace and houses of Sewun are rich with delicate mud lace-work and their whitewashed parapets enable ladies of the harim to look down, invisible, on what goes on below*



*In summer the Sultan retreats to a one-storied bungalow called 'The Glory of Religion'*



*The Sultan of Sewun, Ali ibn Mansur Al-Kathiri, is a hereditary tribal chief and thus commands an allegiance no money can buy. A sociable, pleasant man, he is seen in one of his two cars and (left) in his best uniform*



*The Sultan's little son with Hasan, agent at Sewun of the Al-Kaf Sayyids in Tarim*

on to a swimming-pool and balustrade of carved whitewashed mud; it is called 'Izz-ed-Dīn (the Glory of Religion), and is furnished with upholstered sofas and velvet chairs from Europe, and beds with bolsters. The Sultan instals his guests in this exotic luxury, but he himself prefers a rug and a samovar in some shady corner of his garden, where perhaps at this moment he is reflecting, not without satisfaction, on his remoteness from our civilized West.

I spent pleasant days here, convalescing as I thought, while every kindness was showered upon me. If I had known that my disease was pneumonia my stay in the quiet of Sewun would have been longer; as it was, my hosts, the Al-Kaf Sayyids, expected me in Tarim. I felt that too prolonged a visit is a burden to people who feed their guests on tinned delicacies brought first across the Indian Ocean and then across the Jōl, and so, after ten days' rest, I drove to Tarim, the third and most easterly of these rich cities.

Each one of the three cities has differences of architecture particularly its own. Sewun, with its love of pleasant living, has hit on the happy expedient of covering up its sewers in closed cisterns of mud; in Tarim they run in open shafts close to the front door, giving it the look of an incomplete portcullis; there, too, they have a fashion of decorating the blank lower story of their houses with ribbed lines of mud—like corrugated iron sheets—so adding to the grim effect of the huge square building. But Tarim is the richest of the towns: the family of Al-Kaf, who run it more or less, draw large incomes from Singapore. Thence they import, together with electric light, telephones, cinemas and refrigerators, a touch of the East Indian architecture, brightly coloured with green and blue, disturbing beside the massive sobriety of the old Arabian style.

In Tarim the juxtaposition of modern and mediaeval life reaches its most fantastic limit. The three Al-Kaf brothers,

heads of the clan, have houses both in the town and in the walled palm gardens outside. There in the late afternoon we would gather on carpets and pillows and drink tea; water, carried from the wadi side in goat-skins, was cooled in large thermos flasks; a summer pavilion here, too, had a swimming-pool and bathroom with every modern convenience from Singapore. Except for chairs and tables (and these are provided in those houses where the rare European is entertained) the furnishing of a rich room was rather like Europe in the time of Victorian knick-knacks. Returning late at night through black streets now empty of their daily shouting crowd, by massive gates and small harim doors behind which slaves were sleeping, one would come suddenly upon a flare of electric light above the doorway of some progressive home.

The effect of this medley was surprising. Civilization, scattered in fragments as it were, on the mediaeval background, gained in stature; it lost the deceptive smugness of safety and, in spite of the regrettable ugliness of most of its manifestations, appeared as what it is—man's high adventure against chaos and darkness. To those who can see, Europe no doubt presents the same spectacle; but in the Wadi Hadhramaut, where the blue-painted Beduin skirmish up to the very walls of the cities and the Al-Kaf Sayyids buy them off with presents, the conflict is most plainly visible.

Mr and Mrs Ingrams, a month before my journey, watched a battle from their Tarim windows. I travelled at a peaceful moment, surrounded by small temporary truces, exorbitantly paid for by the revenues of Singapore hotels. Unlike the Makalla Sultans, the Al-Kaf have no regular forces except a sort of Praetorian guard of slaves, a turbulent lot whose revolt a year before had compelled their employers to migrate temporarily to Sewun. Beduin are enlisted now and then to check the slaves, and at other times are



*Emigrants to the East Indies have enriched and modernized the city of Tarim*



*With all its modernity, the mediaeval background of Tarim may be seen in the contrast between the massive main gates of the houses and the little doors behind which the women's quarters lie secluded*



*And whereas in Sewun drains are all covered and run into covered mud cisterns, so that one can wander about with no thought of sanitation, in Tarim they run in open shafts close to the front doors*

beguiled with presents from cutting the road to the sea; the Al-Kaf, indeed, have to meet all the difficulties inherent in a government where force and money are in separate hands. They realize the necessity of organizing an army of their own. They are uncomfortably placed, with no outlet from their eastern part of the wadi except through the lands of Makalla, and they look hopefully to the British Government to procure them the loophole they need—a roadway to the sea. The optimistic beginning of this road already stretches from Tarim over the Jōl—a derelict white band obliterated here and there; for when it reaches the

coastal lands of Shihr it can go no further until Makalla consents; and Makalla is reluctant, and so are the Beduin, who naturally reflect that more motors mean fewer camels, and do all they can to protect their ancient traffic in various destructive ways.

Even between one of the great cities and another in the wadi itself a Beduin safe-conduct is necessary. The Al-Kaf keep a number of the tribesmen on a regular salary and place one on every outgoing car; wrapped in an indigo turban and old shawl, a brass-decorated gun on his shoulder, he gives to the motor the characteristic Hadhramaut touch; the modern and mediaeval meet, without any interposition of the 'Age of Reason'.

When I left Tarim and Sewun and their delightful hospitality, I drove by the southern shore of the wadi to Shibam and thence westward into the Wadi 'Amd, which lives beyond the jurisdiction of Makalla, under the rather nominal rule of unarmed Sayyids, descendants of the Prophet.

Here one forgets the modern altogether and walks into the Middle Ages undiluted. The whitewashed palaces which have grown up in open palm glades during these years of security cease as one drives westward from Shibam; the towns against the cliffs have gates that close at sunset, and screened causeways with mud-built curtains against rifle-fire to protect the husbandman on his way to labour from his beleaguered town. The Wadi 'Amd is chaotic in its higher southern reaches, but even here security has so far increased as to allow caravan transit once more to come up from the sea by the ancient route from Cana. It would well repay a careful exploration. I went no further than Huraidha, the chief northern town, an ancient Himyaritic place with a great ruined site beyond it. My chief remembrance is that of the Sayyids' delightful welcome, their labours for peace and learning among the Beduin who harass



*Except for chairs and tables, which are rare, the furnishing of rich Tarim houses is 'rather like Europe at the time of Victorian knick-knacks'*



*In their walled palm gardens outside Tarim the Al-Kaf brothers—whose clan, aided by incomes drawn from Singapore, more or less runs the city—drink tea in the afternoon*

them from the overhanging Jōl, their mosques and library and school—carried on without help or encouragement from the outside world and for no tangible reward. The valley is open and mostly barren—as one may expect where corn is apt to be harvested under rifle-fire.

It was always important, and I here located the little mediaeval town of 'Andal, 'the first in Hadhramaut', mentioned by early geographers of Islam. No European, as far as I know, has ever gone out of his way to visit 'Andal, and certainly no European woman; but when its small shock-headed indigo-dyed population poured out to meet me I was surprised to find myself accepted as quite a normal phenomenon. They had mostly been abroad at one time or another, in East Africa, and had grown accustomed to the sight of western clothes. Only the women, who had never travelled, remained in a small petrified group apart. They finally sent a messenger to ask if I

would go up to them to be looked at; which I did, and took my hat off to give them a better view. They stood in a double row, quite silent, with eyes shining through the slits of their black masks, until one of them said: "She's laughing"—and it slowly dawned on them that I was made of the same substance as themselves.

Westward and north of 'Amd the country stretches, increasingly desert, towards the wastes round Shabwa, which lies at only four days' camel distance from Shibam. The old road was once described as travelling from garden to garden, through what are now wastes of encroaching sand.

I had become too ill to travel even so short a way. I reached Henin, the last centre on the western road, and thence, after a painful night, turned back, barely able to regain the comforts of Shibam. Here, after three days on the edge of death, I was saved by an Afghan chemist employed by the Al-Kaf in Tarim. Of their kindness,



*Outside the cities the Middle Ages pursue their course unchanged. Although periodically bought off by the Al-Kaf, the Beduin skirmish right up to the long protective walls*



*The husbandman still goes forth to his labour along screened causeways with mud-built curtains as a protection against rifle fire. Here civilization appears as what it really is—'man's high adventure against chaos and darkness'*

and that of my hosts in Shibam, it is not possible to speak adequately.

A little bungalow had been lent me—painted light blues and greens in the Malay fashion; it stood away from the town in a garden of pomegranate trees and palms; it was furnished with tables and green plush chairs, and had terraces facing the sunrise and sunset, under the southern cliff of the valley. It belonged to two brothers, Husain and Sa'id al-A'jam, who visited me every day with one or other of the notables of the town, and would sit round my camp-bed in white spotless draperies, a cashmere shawl thrown over one shoulder, their round cheerful faces full of anxiety and kindness.

They were born in Singapore, and invariably, when I thanked them for the many things they did for me, would brush the matter aside and explain that they were bound to act so since we were children of one Empire: they treated me as a sister 'whose mother is ours'. Many people in England pin their faith to 'collective security and the League of Nations', and yet think little or nothing of the Empire ready to our hand—a league of nations, whose various peoples look towards us with a pathetic hunger for leadership and courage. Possibly the chief difference between the British Empire and the League of Nations at the present moment is that one is in working order and the other is not. To build with what we have, a fraternity of peoples, and make it a power for peace and freedom in the world within the bounds of law—one would think that this might be a vision for those who desire

world peace; who, too often blind to the vast change which during the last decade or two has come over our conception of empire, scarcely notice that *this* is now the greatest instrument for peace within their grasp.

These thoughts do not belong particularly to the Hadhramaut, though the brotherly feelings of my hosts sometimes brought them to my mind. Mostly I lay quietly while the heat of the day slowly increased in the wadi. The last of the harvest was gathered, trodden out under the feet of camels, and carried away from the sun-hardened threshing-floors.

I had written to Aden to mention my sickness, and the letter was sent by a Beduin to the coast to pick up the first steamer. The Beduin runner takes four days only to the camel's six and my message arrived in the unusually quick space of fourteen days. In Aden the Resident and the R.A.F. very kindly decided to hasten the arrival of a practice-flight of bombers to Shibam and to put a doctor on board. I lay meanwhile and contemplated a return across the Jöl in a litter and thought of Mr Bent, whose life and South Arabian travels ended in just such a journey. I thought of this rather gloomily and had already made all arrangements when, on March 16, the eight wings filled the eastern sky and landed. It took only five and a half hours next day to bring me back to Aden, with no incident worth recording except deep gratitude to all concerned—the Aden Residency, the Royal Air Force and its doctor, and the kind people in Aden Hospital who took me in.

# The Development of 'Alpinism' in Switzerland

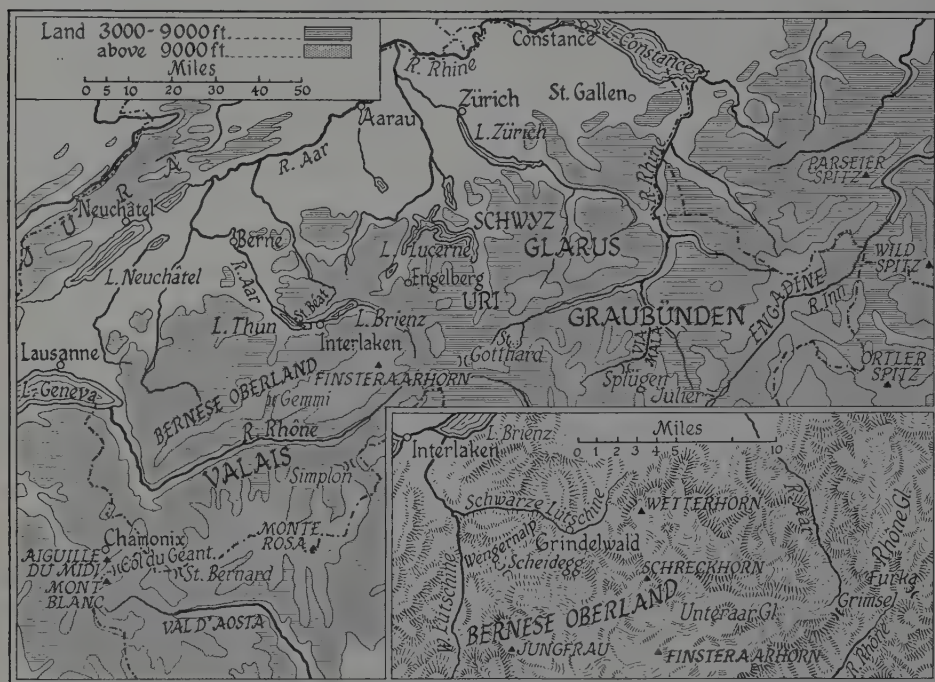
by PROFESSOR DR RUDOLF ZELLER

*In the development of Alpinism we have an example of a spiritual movement which opened up for humanity a new material world—that of the high mountains. No one could be better fitted to elucidate this development than Dr Rudolf Zeller, Director of the Swiss Alpine Museum, to whose collaboration with M. Marcel Godet, Director of the Swiss National Library, we owe the unusual array of old prints assembled from their respective collections to illustrate the theme*

WHAT is 'Alpinism'? It is difficult, in a few words, to explain this complex phenomenon. Perhaps the best definition is that of Dr H. Dübi, a prominent expert on the Alps and a distinguished member of the Alpine Club. He says: "Alpinism consists of an interest in high mountains and their exploration". The interest either may emanate mostly from the scientific point of view or may attempt to possess the mountains more with the

heart than with the understanding. At all events, Alpinism is a spiritual movement which has captured the public imagination and has now become an inseparable part of modern life. The point of examining the development of this movement in special relation to Switzerland is that it had there its origin; that Alpinism was born in the Swiss Alps.

Like any great idea that mankind, as it were, suddenly seizes upon, this intellectual



Stanford, London



J. J. Schenker (1772)

By courtesy of the Swiss Alpine Museum

Until the middle of the 18th century the Alps were regarded as an unfriendly wilderness where terror reigned

movement has its antecedents. In the Ancient World and in the Middle Ages mountains were looked upon with hostility or at least with indifference. This was so in spite of the fact that as early as Roman times some of the passes in the Swiss Alps, such as the St Bernard, the Simplon, Splügen and Julier had not only been traversed but were even equipped with primitive roads. In the Middle Ages quite a considerable traffic, of pilgrims and merchants and even of whole armies, went over the passes. The travellers, however, made no contact with the mountain scenery around the passes. It was decried as an unfriendly wilderness. Knowledge of the Alps was correspondingly slight. The chroniclers of the 16th century, Tschudi, Sebastian Münster, Stumpf and the others, give, in their writings, illus-

trations and maps, various details about the mountains, but they mention only three peaks that were not already known. The Bernese physician Schöpf was the first to refer to such well-known mountains of the Bernese Oberland as the Jungfrau, the Schreckhorn, the Wetterhorn and the Finsteraarhorn. It is true that in Konrad Gessner we may find a man who in 1555, through the title of his work *De Montium Admirazione*, makes it clear that mountains do not arouse in him a feeling of terror; and that, as early as 1574, Josias Simmler gives in his description of Valais extremely interesting particulars about the life of the Alpine people and the art of mountaineering; but these are exceptions. Fear of the Alps persisted and no notice was taken of the important writers who might have become the



R. Savery (1609)

By courtesy of Arthur Kay

*In earlier centuries many artists—among them even the Flemish and Dutch plain-dwellers—had beheld Alpine scenery with an appreciative eye: but always from below, and with a tinge of awe*



*P. Birmann (1758-1844)*

*By courtesy of the Swiss Alpine Museum*

*The second half of the 18th century brought a complete change. A mountain might be called the Schreckhorn, but its horrors were exaggerated with riotous pleasure by awakening Romanticism*

founders of Alpinism. So the position remained throughout the 17th and the first half of the 18th century. In 1712 J. J. Scheuchzer published a map of Switzerland, highly esteemed in its time, and in his *Itinera Alpina* wrote the first detailed description of the country; he was a natural scientist. Recognition of his discoveries was restricted to the small circle of learned men and never extended to the wider circle of ordinary educated people.

The realization that mountains might be something more than merely terrifying shapes grew in entirely different soil. It was fertilized by that feeling for Romanticism disseminated by the writers Albrecht von Haller and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which slowly developed during the 18th century. Haller was the first person, with his poem *Die Alpen* (which was, incidentally, a literary success and went through thirty editions between 1722 and 1777), to break down the prejudice against mountains among educated people. He would never have had this effect if he had not struck the taste of the time. The literary and aesthetic viewpoint which he introduced into people's judgment of Alpine scenery enables him to be linked up with Gessner and directed travellers, who had hitherto stopped short at Jura and the Mittelland—that is to say, the towns and lakes—into the mountains. Haller was a naturalist who could not conceal the fact in his descriptions of natural scenery. The romantic and sentimental element came out much more strongly in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, though in a moral-philosophical dress. His descriptions of Swiss Alpine scenery in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* (1759) are the expression of a man who, weary of civilization, takes refuge in Nature and finds in the Alps the loftiest, wildest and most solitary environment.

The influence of these two writers was enormous. Their writings were known and read all over Europe, and in a short time the Alps became a popular goal for travellers. The age-old hunger for adven-

ture was reawakened in this wave of Romanticism. It gave birth to the sporting spirit of today—a spirit which now qualifies the climber to attempt the really high peaks; an 'Alp-consciousness' emerged which led tourists from the roads and passes into the mountains. Artists were given new subjects, scientists new problems in the phenomena of glaciers. The spell of terror was broken, and man's adventurous spirit found a new outlet. The Alps became suddenly the most popular of all objectives of travel. In the eighties and nineties of the 18th century this enthusiasm for the Alps reached its climax; people's minds became attuned to the conception of the Alps, and science, in its turn, began to concern itself with the mountains.

One can fix upon the year 1741 as a date for the beginning of real mountaineering in the Alps. In that year two Englishmen, Wyndham and Pococke, made a journey from Chamonix to the Montanvers and the 'Mer de Glace'. By the end of the century a whole series of peaks had been climbed. In 1786 Paccard and Balmat reached the summit of Mont Blanc, which de Saussure and Bourrit had already attempted unsuccessfully. This achievement had an even more resounding echo in de Saussure's ascent of Mont Blanc the following year, as he made considerable scientific investigations on the summit and continued them, a year later, during a longer stay on the Col du Géant.

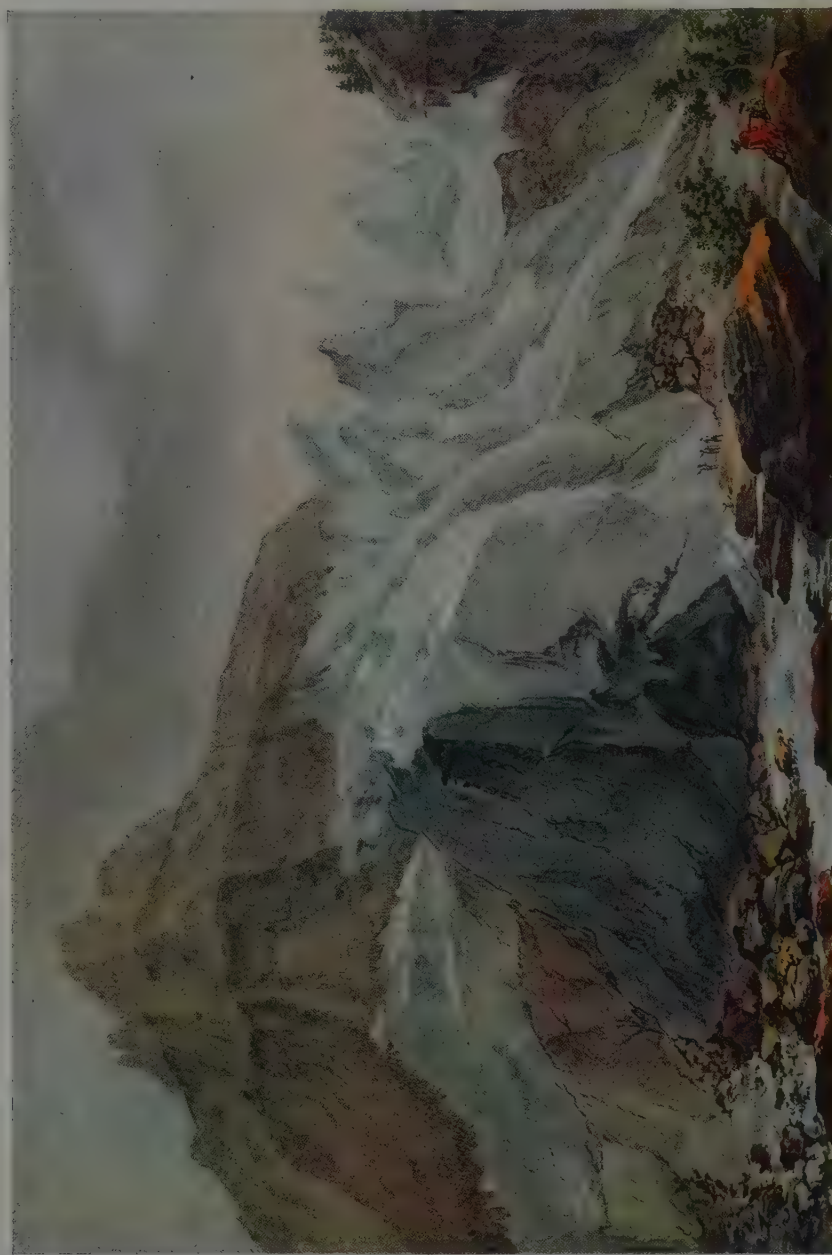
The opening up of the mountains provided new material for artists. It is true that Alpine scenery had, much earlier, fired the imagination of painters and sketchers. Even Albrecht Dürer, at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, had painted some mountain landscapes, so truthful and exact that they appeal to us even from the viewpoint of the mountaineer. Hans Holbein the younger and the Swiss artists Hans Leu and Niklaus Manuel also used the Swiss mountains as backgrounds, just as the



From an aquatint after C. H. W.

### *An 18th-century impression of Alpine Wonders*

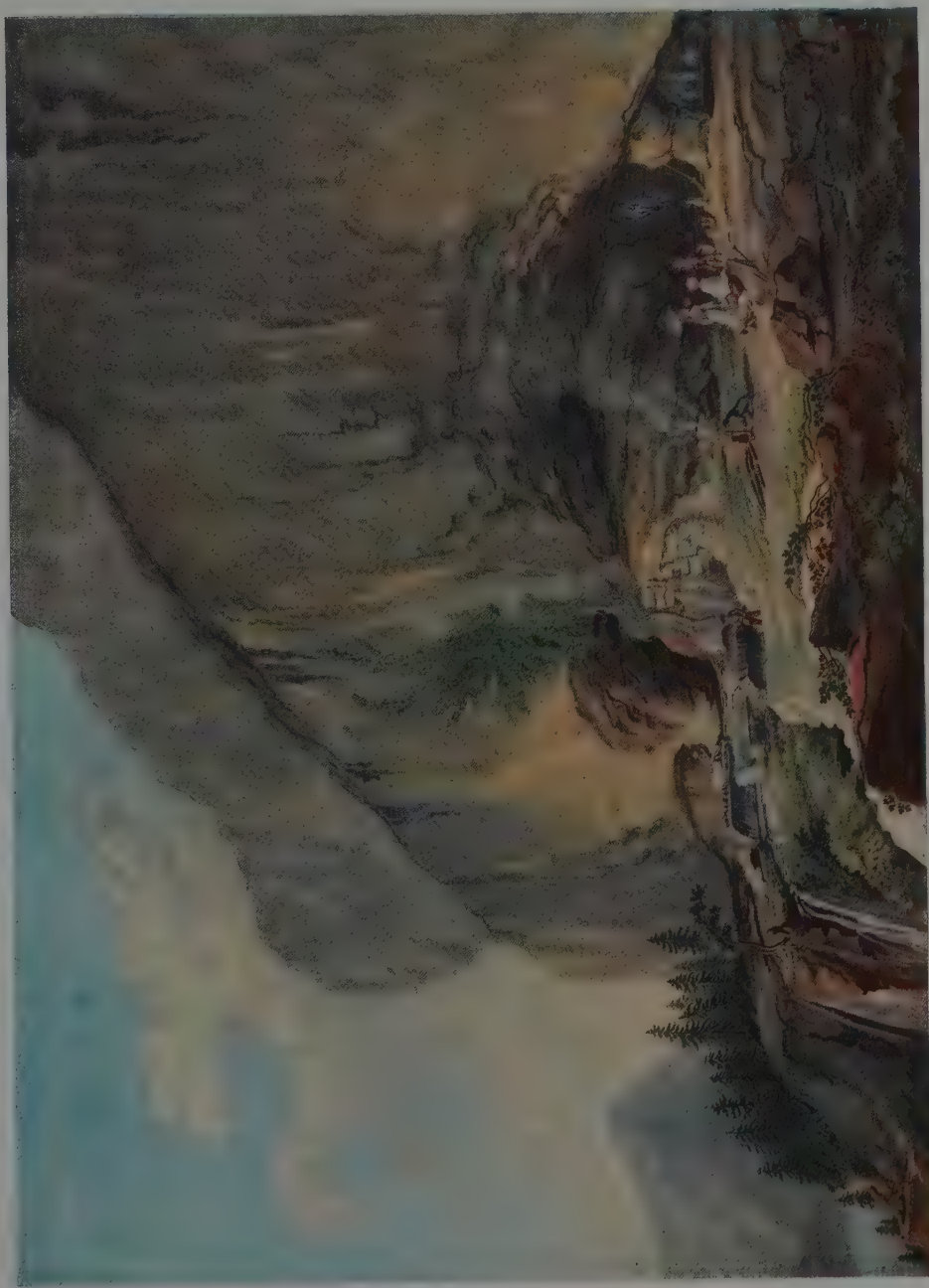
In courtesy of Museo Horii, Nara, Japan



*From an aquatint after C. Wolf*

*By courtesy of Messrs Henry Soltau*

*'The Lutschinen issuing from the Lower Grindelwald Glacier' (1785)*



*From an aquatint after C. H. W.*

*An elegant excursion (about 1785) to the Cavern of St Biat*

*By courtesy of Walker's Galleries*



*From an aquatint by G. Lory*

*A picnic party admiring the Jungfrau from the Wengernalp, about 1820*

Italians used theirs in their 'heroic landscapes'. Nor must one forget, curiously enough, the Flemish and Dutch artists, who, plain-dwellers though they were, turned in the 17th century to the Alpine landscape with vast zeal and ability: Peter Brueghel the elder, Lukas von Valkenbergh, Savery, Momper, Roghmann and Segers, Jan Hackaert and Allaert van Everdingen, to name only a few of them. The engravings and etchings they produced betray a lively appreciation of mountains—still shared by their descendants, for there are excellent mountaineers among the Dutch today. At all events, the landscapes of these northerners are far more natural than the fantastic mountain formations which Matthew Merian evolved in his *Topographie Helvetiens* (1642). This is also the case with Scheuchzer's scientific works; the illustrations attached to his map of Switzerland, published in 1712, are far behind the work of the 16th- and 17th-century artists mentioned above. But science had first to provide a new basis for art, and the work of the Swiss natural scientists did not remain confined to their special sphere. The success which the new painters enjoyed can also be attributed to the growing romantic feeling among travellers, due to Haller and Rousseau.

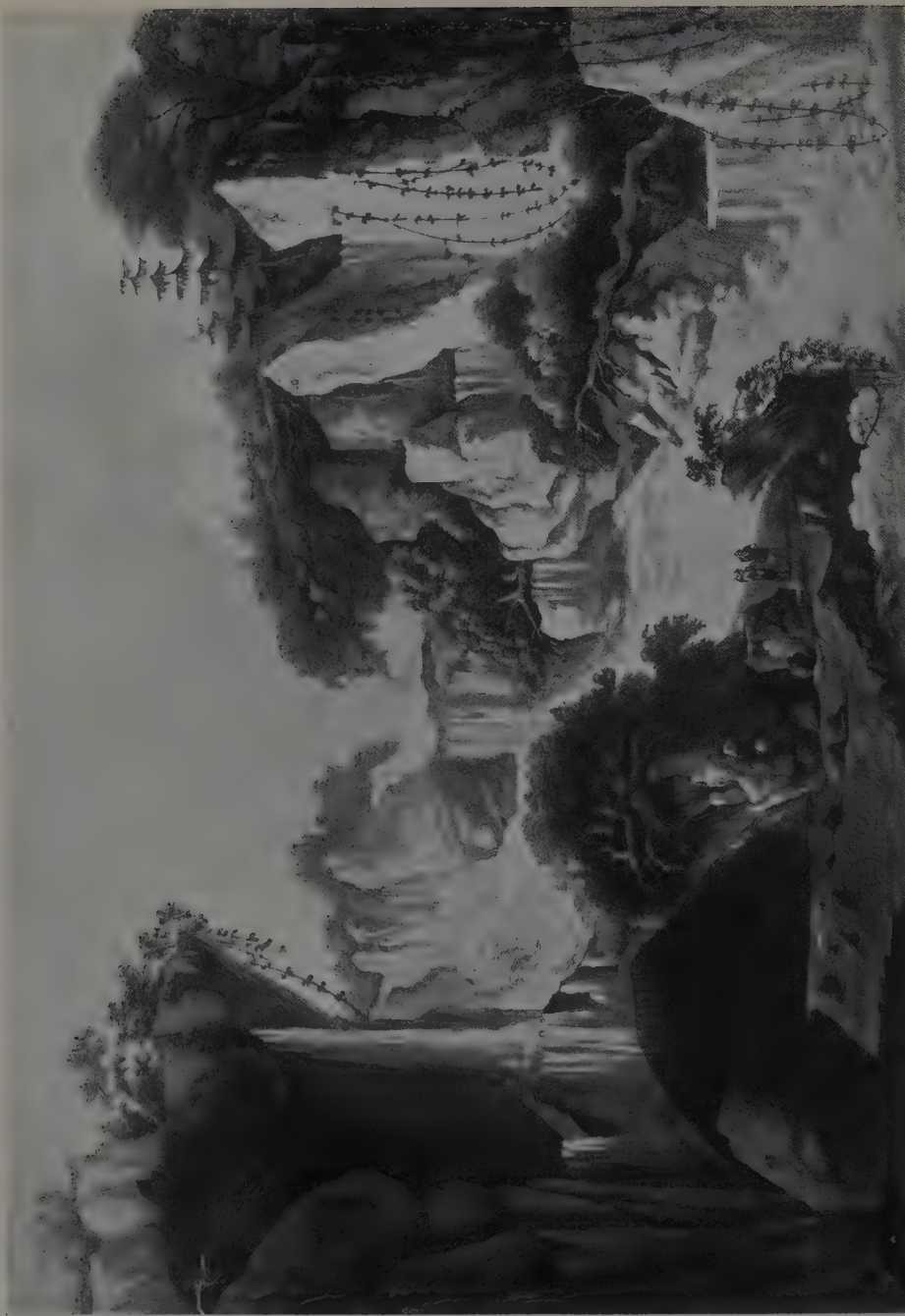
This romantic sense found its artistic expression in the hand-coloured engravings of L. Aberli (1723–1786) and his school. In these the artistic element is well to the fore, but is combined with a naturalistic interpretation which is in complete opposition to the exaggerations of the topographies of the 17th and early 18th centuries. To meet the requirements of the Alpine tours, then coming into fashion, they provided artistic albums, which had a rapid sale as mementoes of mountain journeys. In this way arose that series of coloured engravings which still enchant the mountain-lover and are highly prized. After Aberli, H. Rieter and J. J. Biedermann, J. Brinnen, J. F. Janinet and C. M.

Descourtis, C. Wolf, K. T. Hackert, J. A. Link and G. Lory, father and son, are only a few of the best-known artists. A whole group of artists, mostly French, were engaged on the *Tableau de la Suisse ou Voyages Pittoresques*, which was produced in Paris in 1780.

All these representations of Alpine scenery have this in common, that the mountains are portrayed from below, from the valleys. Many of them, to be sure, do penetrate to the glaciers, painting the ice-clad summits from very much closer at hand. But others, among them Aberli himself, stay down in the great valleys and reproduce charming sections of the Alpine landscape in which lakes play an important part. In all of them is reflected the spirit of travel at that time—of roaming enjoyment, without any particular hurry, stopping in amazement and reverence in the face of this world of lofty mountains. The people who scaled the peaks—the real pioneers of Alpinism—were still too rare to be generally recognized.

The events of 1798—the French invasion of Switzerland—brought this movement to a standstill. The alarms of war and the great political upheavals which this incursion brought about, were, naturally, hardly favourable to so peaceful a growth as Alpine tourism. Yet we must not forget that these campaigns themselves gave rise to Alpinistic achievements which deserve our applause today. The march of General Suwarow and his army over the mountain passes of the Graubünden, Glarus, Uri and Schwyz, and the movements of his opponent, the French general Lecourbe, are among the most remarkable of these feats of Alpine warfare. Nevertheless they had little or no effect on the development of Alpinism.

A revival of the Alpine spirit showed itself with the consolidation of the new political structure, which was accompanied by a renewal of cultural activity. The initiative lay largely with individuals and took as its immediate objective the scientific



L. Belanger (1800)

*The Lutschine torrent—an excellent example of the theatrical fantasy with which the romantic age depicted mountain scenes*  
By courtesy of the Swiss National Library



*G. Lory (1784-1846)*

*By courtesy of the Swiss Alpine Museum*

*Treading harmoniously with the painters come the scientists of the new age, making the most of such phenomena as the mushroom-like 'glacier-tables' of the Aar glacier (above) and the glacial sources of the Rhine (below)*



*L. Bleuler (1792-1850)*

*By courtesy of the Swiss Alpine Museum*



*C. de Mehel (1737-1817)*

*By courtesy of the Swiss Alpine Museum*

*The pioneers of pure mountaineering are also hard at work. One of the earliest and best known, de Saussure, ascends to the summit of Mont Blanc in August 1787*



*L. Bleuler (1792-1850)*

*By courtesy of the Swiss National Library*

*Another early party is seen negotiating a crevasse in the Bossons glacier near Mont Blanc*



A. Winterlin (1805-1894)

By courtesy of the Swiss National Library

*Yet another, ascending Mont Blanc, has arrived at the dark rocks of the Grands Mulets*

investigation of the Swiss Alps. J. R. Meyer of Aarau, an industrialist known also for his philanthropic efforts, commissioned an engineer, J. Weiss, and J. M. Müller of Engelberg, a worker in relief, to produce a great map of Switzerland and a similar relief model. The Napoleonic engineers had brought the new trigonometrical technique into Switzerland, and Meyer's map was to be the first to show Switzerland on this new basis. The *Atlas Général de la Suisse en 16 Feuilles* (1796-1802) is also, therefore, a landmark in Swiss cartography. But it is not remarkable that the best parts of the atlas are those drawn according to Müller's relief. The surveying for this atlas demanded extensive tours and explorations in the mountains, and it consequently shows considerable improvement on former maps. The son and grandson of J. R. Meyer extended the field for Alpine climbers. They scaled the Jungfrau in 1811, and in 1812 their guides reached the summit of the Finsteraarhorn. In the meantime, in East Switzerland, the dissenting priest Placidus à Spescha was at work, and climbed nearly twenty high peaks. In Valais an assault was made on Monte Rosa and the names Zumsteinspitze and Vincentspitze recall the achievements of the years 1819 and 1820. Welden published at that time a good topography of the Monte Rosa range. In the Bernese Oberland von Rohrdorf and F. J. Hugi carried on the work of the Meyers. Hugi's efforts in particular were not unimportant in widening the scientific horizon; a sprained ankle left him sitting on the saddle of the Finsteraarhorn, which today bears his name. He was the first to journey among the glaciers in winter. In the Eastern Alps the two geologists O. Heer and A. Escher von der Linth advanced the knowledge of mountains considerably by their scientific investigations.

The forties of the 19th century witnessed a great advance in the opening-up of the Swiss Alps. Two scientists from Neuchâtel,

Agassiz and Desor, following in Hugi's footsteps, established themselves on the Unteraar glacier, at first under a great block in the medial moraine. Then, from 1844 onwards, they lived in a hut on the left side of the glacier, built for them by their friend Dollfuss-Ausset, the glacier explorer. This hut was called the 'Dollfuss Pavilion'—a name later taken over by the club hut—and has played an important rôle in the history of Alpinism. It was from here that they made their classic investigations of glacial phenomena and climbed the neighbouring peaks. In Valais, at the same time, B. Studer, a Bernese, and the Englishman James Forbes were occupied in similar studies.

Meanwhile, General Dufour had introduced Alpine cartography as part of an official general survey. And even if the topographers made little ado about their mountaineering or of their other touristic achievements (sometimes they were the first to climb a particular mountain) later mountaineers were very thankful for the results of their work—namely, the excellent maps which they produced and through which Swiss cartography became world-famous in the field of mountain surveying.

But mountaineering *per se*, with no particular scientific object, came once more into vogue. Such enthusiasts as Gottlieb Studer of Bern, Melchior Ulrich of Zurich, Zeller-Horner and Müller-Wegmann, and U. Weilenmann of St Gallen explored the Swiss Alps in every direction, traversed many glacier passes and climbed countless peaks. Studer, Zeller and Müller-Wegmann were, in addition, excellent draughtsmen and illustrated the accounts of their exploits. The relationship between man and mountain was altogether revolutionized. In 1796 the passes Furka, Gemmi and Grimsel had been described as 'excessively strenuous, not to say dangerous' and a crossing of the Little Scheidegg thought inadvisable. Yet, as early as 1816-17, B. Wyss was unconditionally recommending the same



*By courtesy of the Swiss National Library*

*And now the solitary forerunner of the tourist legions, traversing by moonlight the Gondo defile*



*J. H. Schilbach (1798-1851)*

*In top-hats and poke-bonnets the first tourists tasted the rigours of such embryo Swiss hotels as the 'Chamois' at Grindelwald (above) or paused to sketch at sunset before seeking shelter in the hospice on the St Gotthard (below)*



*J. U. Füssli (1826)*

*By courtesy of the Swiss National Library*

routes. As a result, a flood of travel books and guide-books appeared: Ebel's *Anleitung auf die nützlichste und genussvollste Art in der Schweiz zu reisen* became the best known. 1832 saw the appearance of Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Switzerland and the Alps of Savoy and Piedmont* and 1844 that of the first Baedeker. The first real mountaineering guide-book was Ivan Tschudi's *Tourist* (1855).

The ice had been broken and true mountaineering became an accepted occupation. As in earlier times, a large number of these climbing expeditions were undertaken by foreigners; the English, already known as a sporting nation, played the principal part. They assaulted the mountain ranges with characteristic energy and helped to produce in Switzerland a race of mountain guides who subsequently had a considerable share in the technical conquest of even the most difficult mountains.

With this increase of mountain travel, it is not surprising that the mountaineers themselves, inspired with the same aims and the same sentiments, should have got to know one another; nor that they should have arrived at the conclusion that they could accomplish more through closer collaboration, and at the same time exchange experiences and reminiscences. Thus arose the Alpine societies and first among them, significantly enough, the English Alpine Club, which began in 1857, as it has remained to this day, a select company of prominent mountaineers. Its established purpose was 'the promotion of good-fellowship among mountaineers, of mountain climbing and mountain exploration throughout the world, and better knowledge of the mountains through literature, science and art'. The German-Austrian Alpenverein followed in 1862: in time it grew to prodigious dimensions. In 1863 the Swiss Alpenklub was founded and soon had some 400 members; today it has over 30,000. The object of this society, too,

was the exploration of the Alps from the topographical, natural-historical and scenic points of view: the results of these researches were to be presented to the public in printed form. Supervision of the guides and the erection of rest-huts were among the club's other aims. It sought to achieve these objects by demarcating so-called 'excursion areas' in which exploration had to be undertaken with special itineraries and maps prepared in conjunction with the Federal Topographical Bureau. Thus the first relief maps appeared and Switzerland became the model for this method of representation. The insistence on scientific research which characterized the first decade of the Swiss Alpenklub manifested itself likewise in the survey of the Rhône glacier which it undertook in association with the Swiss naturalists' society. Later, as the sporting element expanded more and more, the Alpenklub abandoned this undertaking and limited itself to the building of club huts and approaches to them, and to the organization of guides and rescue work. The club's spiritual centre remained always its year-book, which had been, from the beginning, a serious and distinguished publication. Under various editors—not least under Dr H. Dübi—it brought to the Alpenklub the reputation of being an uncommonly active and successful organization. Happily the new publication, *Die Alpen*, has carried on this tradition and adapted itself to the modern outlook and requirements.

With the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries a new phase in the history of Alpinism set in and altered the existing situation in many ways. First of all must be reckoned the rapid popularization of mountain-climbing. In earlier times it had been an *élite* of high-minded persons that travelled in the mountains; then came the middle classes; and now, with increasing needs and facilities, the lower elements of the population also entered the field. Those who found the 'superior'



*L. Deroy (1791-1886)*

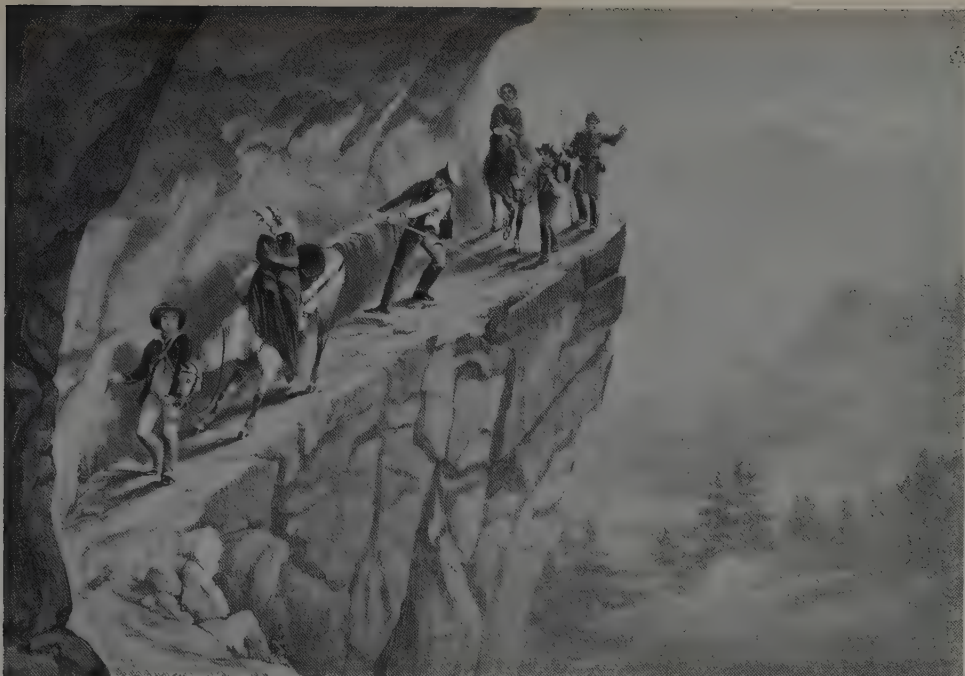
*By courtesy of the Swiss National Library*

*The Alps became more and more popular. Women as well as men, a great many of them English, explored with the aid of guides. (Above) Le Jardin, near Chamonix. (Below) The Furka Pass*



*G. Barnard (c. 1840)*

*By courtesy of the Swiss Alpine Museum*



G. Barnard (c. 1840)

*By courtesy of the Swiss Alpine Museum*

*These fashionable travellers of the early 19th century underwent genuine hardships; the Grimsel Pass (above) was no easy matter, even though the comfortable Grimsel hospice (below) lay at its foot*



G. Barnard (c. 1840)

*By courtesy of the Swiss Alpine Museum*

Alpenklub too expensive or did not agree with its patriotic tendencies, founded their own Alpine societies, with their own rest-houses and institutions. Thus, it is true, mountain sports were brought to the people, furnishing the plain citizen and workman with hours—even days—of the highest enjoyment. On the other hand it was this mass movement, promoted by numerous mountain railways, which went a long way towards despoiling the mountains of their remoteness and solitude. Even so, such is the vast majesty of mountains that he who seeks loneliness and peace may still find them there. A second factor in this sudden change was the rise of 'winter sports' through the introduction of the ski from Nordic lands. Until then, mountain journeys in winter were difficult and seldom undertaken. As soon as the technique of skiing had adapted itself to the Swiss slopes, winter expeditions became a real pleasure. This was not only due to the increased rapidity of progress but especially to the fact that in winter climatic conditions in a great part of the high mountain region are much better, and offer greater likelihood of a week's or a month's steady sunshine, than in the changing summer weather. Thus winter sports now play in many places a more important part than summer mountaineering.

We have spoken above of the growth of 'mountain sports', and this phrase implies a further change in the character of

Alpinism. We have seen how the pioneers of Alpinism were, for the greater part, men of science and only incidentally mountaineers. Then came the purely tourist element which enjoyed mountain-travel for its own sake without any scientific motive. For a long time it seemed as though science was going to give way to enjoyment as the objective of climbing. This new attitude was predominant among the younger people and is quite understandable as a reaction on the part of educated town-dwellers against their environment. Moreover, the popularization of mountaineering affected many people whom neither education nor calling could have brought into any contact with science. An additional consideration was that the conquest of countless peaks by all possible routes gradually made the discovery of new objectives more and more difficult. Thus people were induced to essay routes and to assault peaks which seemed impossible, relying on a refined and mechanized technique. These achievements, which were often enough the results of a feverish desire for sensation, were accompanied by similar exaggerations in the press. This phase also will run itself to death. It is permissible to hope that a form of Alpinism may once more emerge in which all those who have the leisure and the means for mountain exploration will find that refreshment of body and soul which the sublime world of the great mountains holds in store for everyone.

# The Law of Lek

by BERNARD NEWMAN

*Mr Newman's trusty bicycle has taken him to many little-known places and has led him into the varied encounters so entertainingly recorded in his earlier books The Blue Danube and Pedalling Poland. In the following article he tells how he came to venture, even beyond bicycle-range, into a corner of Europe where the blood-feud still survives, and what befell him there*

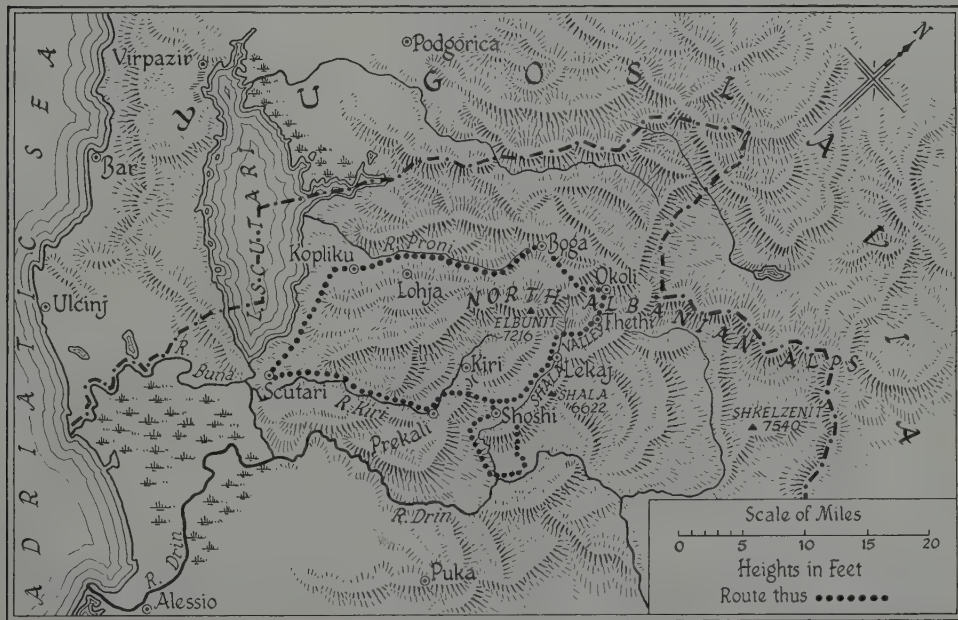
COMMISSIONED by a publisher to write a series of light travel books from the viewpoint of a cyclist, for several weeks I had been pedalling through the mountainous regions of Bosnia and Old Serbia. At last I found myself in Albania, easily the least known of Europe's states. Cycling now became a nightmare; ten years ago the land was almost roadless—today there are a few roads, but as they were built by the Italians primarily for military purposes, their surface is appallingly rough. In a series of painful and weary rides I worked my way from Ochrid to Elbasan, Tirana, and Scutari.

I had a map of Albania; it was Italian, and not very accurate. Already it had let

me down a dozen times, but at Scutari it made me the object of ridicule. I had called on M. Toto, the prefect—a mighty important person in the Balkans; we should call him a governor, but he has far more real powers than ever we give to ours. His secretary and engineer were in the room when, after polite preliminaries, I produced my map. There was a road of some sort over the mountains through Shala, I pointed out—would it be possible to get into Yugoslavia by that route on a bicycle? Immediately my three hosts burst into hearty laughter.

"Why?" they answered my query. "Well, just go to Shala and see!"

So I went. I had already decided that



Stanford, London



*All photographs by Bernard Newman*



*The low country round Scutari, though barren and stony, has long possessed the means of communication that are the mark of ordered government—such as this bridge over the Kiri River, dating from Venetian times*

*Into the high mountains, roads are now being driven where none ever were before. Built by compulsory labour, they are part of King Zog's attempt to open up the outlying valleys and thereby to extinguish the system of blood-feuds—known as the Law of Lek—which still governs the lives of the highlanders*

I must see something of the wild valleys of Northern Albania, anyway. I wanted to set off at once, but apparently it was not so simple as that.

"I must arrange for an escort for you," said the prefect.

"An escort! But I don't want an escort—I always travel alone."

"You can't possibly go into the mountains without an escort," he declared. "You'd get lost."

I pointed out that I had already wandered over most of Europe, and that, when I had been lost, I had usually found myself. But still he protested: evidently he was determined that I should not go alone.

"Well," I capitulated at last, "if I must have a guide, perhaps you could find some English-speaking student who would like to air his English. I'll pay his expenses, of course, and we should be mutually useful."

As I left, it was agreed that I should come back early the following morning. Then M. Mani, the engineer, would take me in his car to Boga, where he was extending the road.

"Well, have you found a companion for me?" I asked, the next morning.

"An excellent man!" said the prefect, a twinkle in his eye. "I'm sure you will be most satisfied."

So I got into M. Mani's car; the road twisted and turned, boring a way into the bleak and forbidding mountains. Soon after Boga we reached the labour camp; here the road was being driven in great zigzags up the side of the mountain. Several hundred Albanians, all tall, powerful men, and all wearing the inevitable white smock, braided trousers, and white skull cap, were clearing away rocks and trees from its path.

The method of recruiting this labour is interesting. Every male Albanian over sixteen years of age is bound by law to give ten days' free labour to the State. If he does not wish to do the work himself, then he must pay someone else to do it for him.

Yet it is not an exorbitant tax, for a day's pay for a labourer is only five leks, or one shilling and threepence.

After an early lunch, a soldier, carrying rifle and bandolier of cartridges, marched up to the hut. He saluted me smartly; then, to my surprise, he began to speak in English, with a strong American accent.

"Private Sabri, sir, reporting for duty," he said.

I turned to M. Mani for explanation.

"This is your escort," he pointed out.

"But—but——" I stammered. The idea of trailing about Albania with an armed escort did not appeal to me a bit. I had expected a student, and got a soldier. Avoiding all offence to Sabri, I argued.

And at length the truth came out. Until a few years ago, of course, Albania was easily the wildest country in Europe. Even today, although a few years of stable rule have had a tremendous effect, the older generation is largely unchanged—you can scarcely hope to alter the mentality of centuries in one generation. Force and vengeance were primary arguments in the old Albanian code; your rifle was your best friend.

Now even in the most primitive of Albanian valleys a stranger is sacred. But a few years ago a most unfortunate accident occurred. Politics are virulent in Albania, and arrangements had been made to 'remove' two members of parliament. An ambush was duly set along a road they must follow; unhappily, two American students happened by sheer luck to come along at the right time and place, and were shot dead before they had a chance to explain who they were. The Government is quite resolved that no similar accident shall ever happen again; hence my armed, English-speaking escort.

There was nothing to be done but to accept the situation. I had many regrets, however: how could I hope to get on intimate terms with the people, with an armed soldier always hovering behind me? Actually my misgivings were unfounded.

The Albanian police and soldiers are now Albanians—for centuries they were Turks—and are on the friendliest terms with the people.

The prefect's staff work was good. Outside the hut I found two peasants with ponies. This was my safari—these men would take me to the first pass, 3000 feet above us. But as we moved off, one of the engineer's assistants ran after us.

"You haven't got a rifle!" he cried. "You can't go into the mountains without a rifle! Here, take mine!"

Our kit loaded on the ponies, we began to climb steadily; occasionally, when the going was easier, we mounted the ponies—though the rough wooden saddles were not exactly the height of comfort. It was a stiff pull, but I was in reasonably good condition after weeks on the roads.

After four hours' steady climbing we neared the pass; the ponies could go no farther, so I paid off their owners—the charge was the noble sum of 9d. each. At the pass itself was a young man with a mule, on which we loaded our kits. Evidently my journey was going to be easy.

The panorama from the pass was magnificent. I was a good 6000 feet above sea level; at my feet lay a narrow green valley; all about were vicious rock masses, flaked with snow; opposite were still higher mountains—a great grey range. This was the Albanian-Yugoslavian frontier. And, as I saw the wild character of the country, I understood the mirth of the prefect when I had suggested making the journey on a bicycle.

The youth carried a rifle, and about his waist was a belt of cartridges. My bare knees appeared to fascinate him as he trailed behind me, hanging on to the tail of his mule when it approached a dangerous slope. The descent looked impossible to a man, much less a mule—two thousand feet of broken rock, almost sheer. Yet the mule was perhaps the least distressed of all of us.

As we approached the valley, I asked

Sabri where we should spend the night. The village of Thethi appeared to consist of about a dozen houses, scattered over an area of several square miles. Which was the inn?

"There is no inn," he said. "We just stay at the first house we come to."

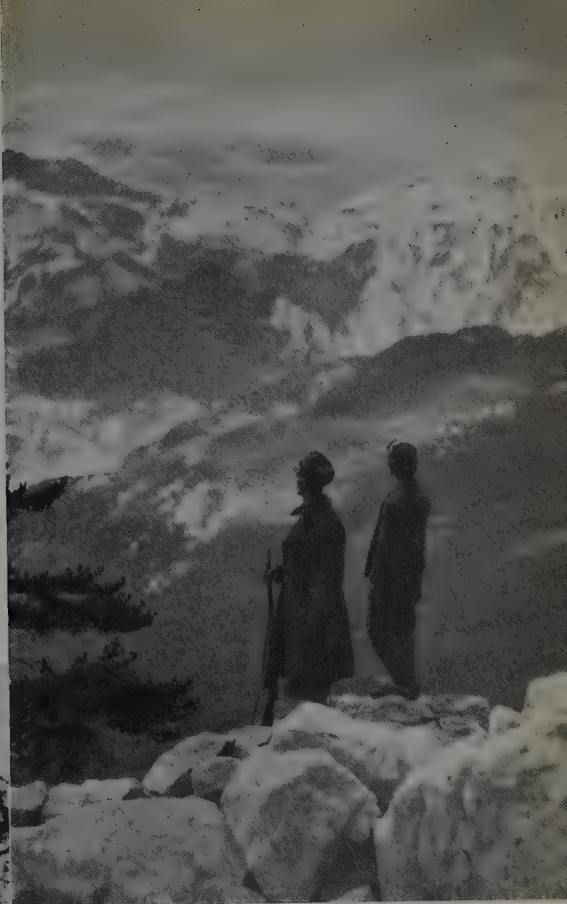
Then I learned something of the wonderful code of hospitality of the Albanian mountains. Every house is open house, especially to strangers. The first house happened to belong to the family of our muleteer, who pressed us to stay there.

There was something strange about the house—which was an exact pattern of all its neighbours. Solidly built in stone, it had scarcely a window—just half a dozen little holes about a foot square. Knowing Albania as I did already, the reason was obvious—the house was a fortress as much as a home.

It is necessary to explain something of the Law of Lek, the strange code which governs the lives of the Albanian mountaineers. It is based on that terrible adage, 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'. If a man harms you, then you shoot him. But by that act his family is insulted; to regain its honour, the dead man's nearest relative must shoot you. Then your nearest relative must shoot him. So it goes on, until whole families and tribes are exterminated.

Today the vendetta is illegal—twenty years ago it was normal. King Zog has announced his intention of wiping it out, and to that end has formed an armed gendarmerie under British officers. This has worked wonders, but it cannot alter the habits of generations in a night. In Tirana and the towns of the south the vendetta is almost dead. But in the mountains it still survives. Under the new modern influences, however, it is gradually diminishing—the prefect of the Mati valley told me that whereas he used to have at least one vendetta murder a week in his valley, now the average was only one in six weeks.

*(Below) On the 6000-foot pass between Boga and the Shala valley. So powerful is the rule of the rifle in High Albania that foreign travellers are furnished with armed escorts*



*(Above) Looking over the Shala valley from the pass, towards the great grey mass which forms the frontier between Albania and Yugoslavia; highest of the mountain ranges dividing northern Albania into a series of almost isolated valleys*

All kinds of rules govern this code of 'honour', and all are strictly observed. All women and children and all strangers are exempt from feuds, and if your enemy is walking with a woman or a stranger, then you may not shoot him. Of great force, too, is the *besa*, a word of honour or exemption. I may arrange a *besa* with you to cover a certain period or purpose, and during its continuance our feud is dormant. The moment it expires I may shoot you dead.

With such drastic laws governing the lives of the people for several centuries, no wonder that the houses are built for security rather than for comfort. I never saw such solid yet primitive places. Animals



*In the high valleys the stone houses are built like miniature fortresses with tiny windows. Round them the maize-fields cluster, for the people, constrained by blood-feuds, do not venture far*

occupied the ground floor, humans the first. This consisted of one large room, an open fire in the middle. Here the whole family was congregated for the evening meal. There were over thirty men, women and children present—for all the male branches of the house make their home in the family mansion.

I was mighty hungry after my strenuous climb. After the family had got over the excitement of my arrival, and had examined with great interest my shorts and bare knees, I parked my rifle in a corner and prepared for a repast. I didn't get it. The people kindly offered me the best of everything they had, which consisted exclusively of maize bread and sour milk.

Sabri explained that this was the staple diet of the Albanian peasant. He eats meat only on feast days; until we happened to chance on one of these, we would have to content ourselves on an exclusive diet of horrible maize bread and appalling sour milk.

I was not content: I longed for a juicy steak. However, I had asked to go to Shala, and to Shala I had come.

Sabri and I were both tired, and I suggested that we should go to bed. He grinned, and I guessed that another disappointment awaited me. When everyone was fed, the whole family prepared to turn in. Bed-making was simple. Piles of bracken were dragged out from the corners of the room, rough rugs laid on it, and home-made blankets doled out. Then the whole thirty of us lay down in two rows in the one room—with two small windows not more than a foot square. And before we lay down a man shut them both! I can now visualize quite easily the Black Hole of Calcutta.

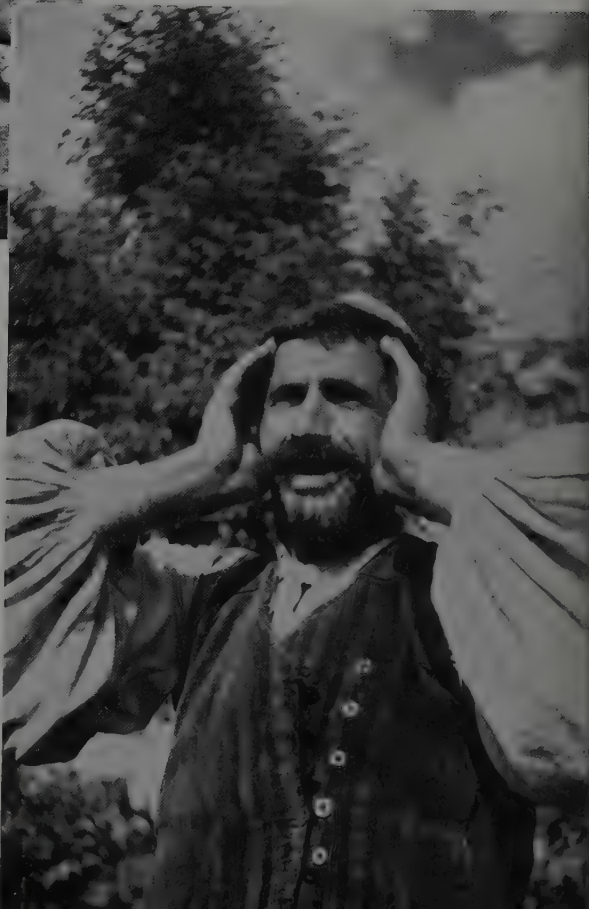
After a restless night we were up at dawn. Before we set off, I chanced on another casual reminder of that primitive Law of Lek. The youth who had guided and guarded us in our descent the previous evening had come to see us off. I thought I ought to have his name for my book.



*The Shala valley. The monastery of Thethi is in the background*



*The youth who turned out to be a girl. The Law of Lek dictates that if all the men of a family are killed in a blood-feud, the eldest unmarried girl must become the man of the house and continue the vendetta. This had been the fate of Mr Newman's guide*



*The 'telephone' of the Albanian mountains: a high-pitched call, effective for three or four miles. The thumbs are inserted in the ears to prevent the drums bursting. By this means, enemies in a blood-feud may be warned that the caller is coming with a stranger and is, therefore, by the Law of Lek, inviolable*

"Just ask this fellow his name," I said to Sabri.

"Fellow?" he echoed. "Why, he's a girl!"

"Rubbish," I said.

"He is a girl!" He turned to the youth: "Aren't you a girl?" he demanded.

The youth said yes. Here was a poser: he wore man's attire, carried a rifle and belt of cartridges, yet said he was a girl! The explanation was soon forthcoming. By the Law of Lek, if all the men of a family are killed in a vendetta, then the eldest unmarried girl must become the man of the house. This had been the fate of my guide; her brother had been shot only a few weeks before the date of her wedding, so she had promptly renounced marriage for ever, donned trousers, and picked up the gun. For the rest of her life she would live as a man.

As I looked at her photograph afterwards, I decided that I ought to have suspected the truth earlier. There was something feminine about her—particularly when compared to the primitive masculinity of the Albanian man. I looked at a picture I had taken the previous evening, when she and Sabri had stood high on the pass, gazing over the valley [see page 147]. Sabri stands erect, but she is bending a knee in true Hollywood fashion.

For the next day's journey no pony was available, but there was an ample supply of porters. Generally I used to start off with one porter, and finished up the day with three or four. However, the cost was by no means excessive. One Albanian giant—I abandoned the attempt to call my escorts and porters by their names, and addressed them all as George—carried my pack and Sabri's, my rifle and his own, for 22 miles over a mountain track, and his pay was 1s. 3d. He was so delighted at getting it that he immediately fired off his rifle into the air—thereby wasting the odd threepence.

The journey down the valley of Shala was fascinating. The narrow floor of the

valley is covered with maize-fields, and the flanking mountains are magnificent. At the monastery of Thethi we halted for refreshment—there was nothing to eat but maize bread, but an ample assortment of drinks, including a potent yellow liqueur made by the monks.

As we approached the end of the valley, my porter for the day—George II—suddenly dropped his load, stuck his thumbs in his ears, and began to yell. I had already met this mountain phenomenon—the Albanian 'telephone'. A man on the mountains will shout down a message to his home, or to a man on the opposite mountain, three or four miles away. It sounds incredible, but it is perfectly true. The pitch of the voice was far higher than I could reach—a mere squeal: the thumbs were inserted in the ears to prevent the bursting of the ear-drums.

I had previously been fascinated at the sight of two men conversing at a distance of three miles. This 'telephone' is the invariable method of communication in High Albania. Yet I asked what George II was saying.

"He is shouting: 'I am coming down the valley with a stranger!'" Sabri explained. It appeared that George II had a blood feud with a family of the next valley. As he did not wish to be shot, he issued a periodic warning as he approached, since by the Law of Lek no one could kill him in the presence of a stranger.

"But how will you get back?" I asked him, anxiously, via Sabri.

"Oh, that's all right," he assured me. "I shall get a woman to walk back with me."

I am afraid that I did not give serious enough credence to this universal law of vengeance. Every peasant I met was so cheerful and friendly, immediately leaving his work to guide and guard me, rifle in hand, across his stretch of territory; it seemed incredible that these rifles could be used in such frightful and treacherous manner.



*The escort provided by the gendarmerie captain for Mr Newman's journey from Shala to Shoshi—five regulars, three irregulars and two hangers-on! The Albanian gendarmerie of some 3000 men and 125 officers is organized under a dozen British Inspectors*

But the next night I reached a small gendarmerie post, commanded by a captain; this was my last night in Shala—tomorrow I would pass into the valley of Shoshi.

"I must increase your escort," the captain declared.

"But no!" I protested. "I am a stranger—sacred under the Law of Lek."

"Yes," he explained, "but in High Albania the dangerous part of a journey is that over a pass separating two tribes who happen to be at feud with one another. They have a nasty habit of shooting first and asking afterwards—they might not find out that you were a stranger until the inquest!"

Yet, in spite of his persistence, I was not prepared for the escort which awaited me next morning. It consisted of five regu-

lars, three irregulars (very!), two ponies a mule, and a couple of hangers-on! Entering into the spirit of the thing, I lined up my army before setting out on the march, and gave a series of orders in my best sergeant-major voice; only Sabri understood them, but the others were very impressed.

The precaution of the captain seemed quite unnecessary. I did not sustain a single casualty in the 'perilous' journey. Instead of bullets, I met smiles and stares of curiosity. What was more, this was a Sunday and a feast day. In every house a whole sheep was cooking on the spit, turned slowly by the oldest woman of the family.

"Come back this evening!" they all cried. "Then the sheep will be done."

"I shall be there!" I assured them. I

had had nothing but nibbles of maize bread for three days, and was really hungry.

That evening Sabri and I made a round of the houses scattered about the valley. To say that I was a sensation is to put it mildly. I was ensconced in what was usually the only chair of the house—the only other furniture was a huge wooden chest—and the whole family crowded about me. After drinking the inevitable *rakia*, huge slices of delicious mutton were placed in our fingers. This was the feast; in Albania a feast is a feast, not just an occasion for dancing and music. This people did not dance, and had no music; they just feasted.

After I had eaten about four pounds of mutton I decided not to visit any more houses. Sabri, though not more than half my size, appeared ready to carry on indefinitely. So we returned to our billet,

the house of a priest. Though simple enough, it was a palace compared with the crudely substantial peasant homes.

The priest led a lonely life—the only educated man within an area of several hundred square miles. Earlier in the day I had seen his flock at church. The men carried their rifles, as always, but by the Law of Lek they were not allowed to shoot an enemy in church. As a sign of devotion, they even unloaded their rifles before entering the building.

All wore Sunday-best—the men linen trousers, long jackets and black sheepskin jackets, the women costumes of home-made cloth of sombre hues, so thick and stiff that it resembled a board. Everything was home-made from start to finish—from the back of the sheep, via distaff and hand-loom, to the back of the wearer.

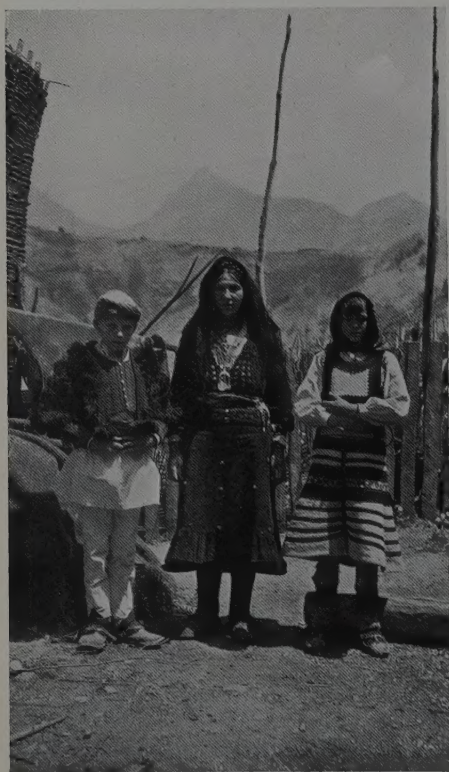
The next morning I got an unexpected shock. Sabri had been a little off-colour,



*Outside the church at Shoshi. Rifles are carried to church but are unloaded before entering, for the Law of Lek, while imposing the obligation of vengeance without, is sufficient protection within*

and maybe the excessive consumption of mutton had not effected a cure. He was a Mohammedan from the malarial district of Southern Albania, and an attack of fever was upon him. Yet his misfortune freed me; in spite of the protests of prefects and captains, I was quite convinced that I could roam the Albanian valleys alone and unharmed. Sabri was too weak to protest, so I slung my pack and set off to the south-east.

Within an hour I nearly regretted my impetuosity. As I approached a flock on the mountain-side, three vicious wolf-dogs made a rush at me. And I had forgotten to bring my rifle.



*Albanian peasant costumes vary from valley to valley; but the hand-made cloth, stiff as a board, is always black and white, without colour*

I had only a few seconds in which to think. But before making my journey I had discussed it with that veteran Balkan traveller, Sir John Foster Fraser, who crossed Albania when it was the Bad Land of Europe. Now I remembered his advice: "When you are attacked by dogs—as you will be—don't fight or run away. Just sit down." It sounded well enough at the time, but when the real moment came it needed every ounce of self-control to persuade myself to squat in the path of the onrushing hounds. Even then I grasped my dagger tightly.

But it acted: the theory that dogs will not attack a sitting human was justified. They halted, savage and suspicious; they barked furiously—but they did not bite. Yet I was but little consoled—how long would this last? I threw them a piece of maize bread from my pack—they disdained it. Evidently they wanted raw meat! I wish my nerve had been strong enough to permit me to take a photograph of those snarling snouts. Then, from a distance, came the wail of the Albanian 'telephone'. Evidently the dogs recognized the call, for they slunk unwillingly away.

As I expected, my welcome in the valley of Temali was warm and friendly, even if the curious attention I evoked was rather embarrassing. What was more, I had something to eat—the remains of the previous day's feast. And once again I ran into the ubiquitous Law of Lek—nothing more or less than an actual vendetta killing.

I did not see the actual murder—that had happened the previous day. The body had been prepared for burial, but the people were intrigued at my interest—emphasized by my difficulty in surmounting the problem of language. There was no coffin; the dead man, dressed in his best clothes, had been tied to a straight plank, and then covered with an embroidered sheet. As a reward for my interest, they undressed the body so as to



*The Albanian highlander's greeting: touch cheeks, hold hands. Women are never saluted publicly*



*The rugged Albanian mountains and valleys which gave birth to the Law of Lek*

show me the bullet wound through the stomach! The brother of the dead man was the figure of the hour: after the funeral he would prepare for his vengeance. Until this was achieved, his own honour was sullied; afterwards, his life was in continuous danger. It seemed a happy sort of world to live in.

For two days more I wandered through pleasant valleys and over grey, gaunt mountains. Then I turned back towards Shoshi and Scutari; I had engagements in England, and was a good week's journey from home.

Because of the overwhelming friendli-

ness of the mountaineers, perhaps I underestimated the potential perils of my journey. For the last day the helpful captain of gendarmes at Shala had again arranged additional escorts, as well as providing a pony. Two soldiers marched with me for seven or eight miles, where they would hand me over to another pair. Each time a small transaction was concluded there was a signing of papers.

"What is all this?" I asked of Sabri.

He picked up the paper which the new escort had just signed, and translated its contents: "Received, one Englishman—alive!"